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THE PRESENCE OF GOD

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THE PRESENCE OF GOD

A STUDY IN DIVINE IMMANENCE AND TRANSCENDENCE

BY

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WITH A PREFACE BY

CHARLES GORE, D.D.

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PREFACE

AMONG those groups of the men and women of to-day whose interest lies in giving a rational interpretation to religion or, in other words, finding its philosophy, or again, among those whose interest is in sacramentalism in the broadest sense, the manifestation of God in visible forms, the word on which chief stress is laid has come to be "immanence"—the immanence of God meaning that God is to be sought and found not apart from the world but in the world, as experience knows it and science discloses its secrets, not apart from history but in history, and especially in the human character of Christ; and again not apart from the Church and its sacramental fellowship but in the actual institution and its sacraments. This is sometimes called "the religion of the Spirit"—the Spirit being the movement and operation of God within things or persons. Meanwhile, there have been others engaged in pointing out that this religion or philosophy of immanence involves all the perils of pantheism, and that it needs a compensating stress laid on the transcendence of God—that is on God, as He is in Himself, independently of all created things or persons, their Creator and their Judge—which is the conception of God which we owe to the Hebrew prophets on whose message, regarded as a real self-disclosure of God, the Christian religion is based. Thus the main theological controversy of to-day is the controversy concerning the transcendence

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and immanence of God. There lie on my table among just published books two which illustrate what I mean—Canon Oliver Quick's *Liberalism, Modernism and Tradition* (Longman), which very gently but very incisively calls attention to the real meaning of the declaration that Godhead and manhood are at bottom one and the same thing; and Canon Wilfrid Richmond's *Philosophy and the Christian Experience* (Blackwell, Oxford), which again occupies itself with the problem. So does the book which I am now seeking to introduce to the public, but it deals with it from the point of view gained by a special experience. For Canon Holmes has been for twenty years a member of the Oxford Mission to Calcutta, and has been the Editor of the unique little paper *The Epiphany*, in which, alone among papers as far as I know, the various minds of India express themselves side by side with the minds of English missionaries by way of friendly controversy or question and answer. We in England are now accustomed to regard highly optimistic estimates of Indian metaphysics as a sign of enlightenment. Now Canon Holmes is deeply sympathetic with Indian thought, but he knows it from within too deeply to ignore its fundamental and disastrous weaknesses. His special experience and sympathy makes this study of Transcendence and Immanence in my judgment exceedingly valuable. I cannot profess that I can quite always agree with him. Had he been at home there are sentences in his book which I should have liked to ask him to reconsider. But it is not the books with every sentence of which we can agree from which we learn the most. This is a book from which we may drink truth as from a fountain of real thought. And it is written from no merely intellectual standpoint. The spirit of the book is devotional and in the true sense practical. The writer

knows that Christianity is a life—it is " the way "—before it is a doctrine. And the main aim of the book is to show us how to walk in the way, which yet we cannot do without right thinking ; for the Way is also the Truth.

I ought to explain that if one had been sought to introduce this book to the English public who was a master in philosophy, I should not have been the man ; I am only a learner, and very often a sadly puzzled learner. My justification for doing what I am here doing is that I am Chairman of the Oxford Mission to Calcutta, and have thus the honour allowed to me of recommending to the reading public not the least valuable fruit of the Mission.

CHARLES GORE

St. Andrew's Day, 1922.

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PROLOGUE

IN Central India not far from a city called Jabalpur there is one of "the world's wonders" to which European sightseers and Indian pilgrims flock. There is a deep river, the Nirbudda, which runs so softly that it hardly seems to move as it flows between lofty and precipitous cliffs. The wonder, however, is not in the river but in the cliffs, for they are all of marble, white, blue, black and red.

The European visitors come to see the great marble rocks which overhang the river, but the Indian pilgrims come to visit a temple which is built into the marble. In the innermost shrine of this temple is a large image of a bull and mounted on its back are the figures of a god and goddess. If one who speaks the Hindi tongue goes to the priest of this temple and asks him how came the image there, he tells the following story.

Many generations ago, he relates, there lived in a cave of the marble ramparts of this river a holy man who spent his days in ceaseless contemplation of the divine. He was a man so relentless in his austerities that he was more of the spirit than of the flesh. Drawn down from their heavenly home by the compelling force of such ascetic holiness, a god and his consort appeared to him one day, mounted upon a great white bull, and for awhile the god conversed with the hermit.

But after a little the holy man, unwilling that he alone should be partaker of this glory, made the request that he might be allowed to bring the people of the neighbouring village to see the deities who had thus graciously vouchsafed to come down to earth. Leave was given, but at once apprehension entered the mind of the man. Perhaps while he was gone to fetch the villagers the gods would disappear, and it would seem to those whom he had summoned to the sight that his vision was but the creation of

his own ecstasy. So he again made petition: "Will ye surely stay till I return?" and the word was pledged: "We shall surely stay till thou returnest." At once he set out to the neighbouring village, making his way along the rough narrow track at the top of the steep rocks overhanging the deep dark stream. As he went his way there kept resounding in his ears the gracious promise: "We shall surely stay till thou returnest." There came another thought: "How blessed a thing it would be if gods should for ever tabernacle among men!" Then he remembered that the promise was that the gods would surely stay *till he returned*. But suppose he never returned, the gods would then stay on for ever; earth would be their home instead of heaven. Suppose he never returned! He looked down from the marble heights into the dark river below. In a moment he had made his decision. There was a loud splash; he had flung himself into the water and was seen no more. It was abundantly worth the cost if by his death he could win the abiding presence of gods upon earth.

The priest of the temple, however, goes on to relate that the gods waited and waited, but the hermit did not return. Then, because it was too great a thing that the Divine Presence should be constantly and continually given to men, they determined that they must return to heaven. But before they ascended they carved out of the white marble a perfect likeness of themselves seated on a bull, and this they left behind as a sign that once at any rate gods had visited the spot.

To this day the Hindu priest points to the marble sign as the proof that the Divine Presence once was really there.

"The pre-Christian religions were the age-long prayer: the Incarnation was the answer."*

The old Hindu ascetic died, so runs the legend, that gods might for ever tabernacle among men. The Incarnation is the answer to the age-long prayer, and the festival of Pentecost is the pledge of the unfailing and continual Presence of God Incarnate among and within men.

* Illingworth.

THE PRESENCE OF GOD

CHAPTER I

THE DIVINE IMMANENCE

"TO most of us, whether we profess to be Christians or no, God does not really exist; at best He is the expression of our desire that He should exist; and so we never think of Him as though He did exist." *

So a thoughtful writer has assured us. Another has said that for nearly all mankind God is an inference, not an experience. Another has urged that if religion means communion with God, and communion means the realized or experienced sense of God's presence, then with most men religion will be abandoned as at present beyond reach.

On the other hand, we find Bishop Temple declaring that the first evidence to the religious man of the existence of God is his own experience: "No one who has ever had even a moment of such experience can afterwards quite ignore it; it will perpetually challenge his attention."

Donald Hankey, the author of *The Student in Arms*, says quite explicitly: "Jesus lives. We know it, because when we try to obey Him, and to pray to Him honestly, we feel His Presence."

The question arises, Is religion possible if the God Whom we worship, to Whom we pray, is no more than an expression of our desire that He should exist, or if an experienced sense of God's presence is beyond the reach of the majority, perhaps the large majority of mankind?

At the least the Christian religion implies a very definite relationship, and though it may be possible for a relationship to exist when one of the parties to it may be pro-

* Clutton Brock.

foundly unconscious of the existence of the other, yet no one could think of such a relationship without a sense of sadness. A child who intensely desired that he might have a living father would find that desire a most disappointing substitute for the presence of the father himself.

To describe God as an inference does not necessarily preclude the reality of conscious experience. Probably our belief in the existence of all human persons of whom we have had conscious experience is at the bottom an inference, though, of course, it must also be much more than that. That is to say, we have never seen any person. We have only seen certain physical signs, heard certain sounds, or felt certain resistance to the touch, and from them we infer the presence of the person, because we have experience of personality in ourselves. The person is certainly not his body or the sounds that he makes. But we draw an instantaneous inference of the presence of personality akin to ours. In this sense we may say that all human existences and presences are as much inferences as the existence and presence of God.

True, the inference is so rapid as to be almost intuition, and it admits of no question or dispute, but still it is an inference. Very soon it passes into immediate contact of personality with personality, or of spirit with spirit, but it begins with inference.

Old Indian thinkers knew they did not see the person but only the signs that a person was there : " It is myself within the heart, smaller than a corn of rice, smaller than a corn of barley, smaller than a mustard seed, smaller than a millet seed or the kernel of a millet seed. He also is myself within the heart, greater than the earth, greater than the sky, greater than the heaven, greater than all the world." *

Of course, here the philosopher is identifying his own self with the universal Spirit or Brahma, but the personality is known by inference.

* *Chand Upanishad* 3-14-3. Compare the Christian belief as expressed in Chesterton's poem in the *Oxford Book of Mystical Verse*.

To say then that God is an inference to most people is to say that most people are not able to proceed further than the recognition of the Divine Presence by means of certain signs, that they do not pass into conscious experience of the contact of the Divine Personality with their own personality, of the Divine Spirit with their own spirit. It is not, of course, to deny the contact ; it is only the statement that most men are not aware of it. Their knowledge is an intellectual knowledge.

This is a very different thing from saying that God is for most Christians as well as for other people only the expression of their desire that He should exist. An intellectual conviction of the Presence of God, based on certain signs, is sufficient in itself to disprove the statement that most people never think of Him as though He did exist A man may be blind, deaf, dumb, and yet by the sense of touch may draw the inference that personalities similar to himself are both real and present. A man may be intensely unconscious of any sensible or emotional experience of God, and yet may be convinced by such limited experience of signs as he may be able to have, that these signs infallibly denote the Divine Presence.

It follows that if a man is intellectually sure of God, and of God not in some remote distance but present, he will try to hold some kind of communion with Him. By presence we mean that at least He is within reach of direct communication. If God is present we can directly communicate with Him. Spiritual telegraphing or telephoning is unnecessary. We mean, of course, a great deal more than this, but we can never mean less than this.

In Eastern countries, India for instance, it is believed that people are much more spiritual than they are in the Western countries, where men are so occupied with secondary causes that the Ultimate is either veiled or ignored. But what is meant by spirituality in this sense is something profoundly different from spirituality in the Christian sense. Ask an educated Hindu what is his first thought when he utters the word God, and he will answer

shaukti. The term means force, energy, power. To think of God is to think of the energy that is ceaselessly at work in the universe. And not only ceaselessly at work, but universally at work. He has no difficulty in realizing the Presence of God, because within a blade of grass there is *shaukti*, in the moving clouds there is *shaukti*, in the soft winds there is *shaukti*, in the raging torrential river there is *shaukti*. But to him this *shaukti* is the very uncreated life of God Himself. He can be worshipped in it. Is not God everywhere? it is asked. "If He is everywhere, I may worship this tree or this stone." If the immanent life and force of the universe is God, it is easy enough to be religious or spiritual, in the sense that there is no difficulty whatever in conscious experience of His Presence. Indeed, it is impossible not to be conscious of His Presence if we are possessed of the five physical senses. The fruit of spirituality of this kind is not what the spirituality of the Christian is expected to produce.

For *shaukti*, realized as the life of God, does not necessarily tend to righteousness. It leaves no room, as we shall see more in detail later, for conceptions of sin. The most revered "saint" of modern Bengal is Rama Krishna, but he could teach his disciples "God tells the thief to go and steal and at the same time warns the householder against the thief." On another occasion he said, "When I look upon chaste women of respectable families, I see in them the Mother Divine arrayed in the garb of a chaste lady; and again, when I look upon the public women of the city, sitting in their open verandahs, arrayed in the garb of immorality and shamelessness, I see in them also the Mother Divine sporting in a different way."

All this is the logical result of regarding all the energy of the universe as God. The Presence indeed becomes easy to realize; there is no need to speak of God as the desire that He should exist. He meets us at every turn, we experience Him consciously in every breath. There is, however, in Hinduism a nobler doctrine of the Presence than this, nobler in this, that its fruit will be removed from all

that we think of as unrighteousness. It will not produce righteousness, but it will be no incentive to sin.

To the pure Vedantist, questions of the Divine immanence or the Divine transcendence are meaningless. What appears to the world is only the realm of ignorance which deludes and deceives. " It is thy soul, which is within all. He is thy soul, the inner guide, the immortal. He sees but is not seen, hears but is not heard, comprehends but is not comprehended, knows but is not known : there is none beside him that sees or hears or comprehends or knows." *

Spirituality founded upon the conception of pure Vedantism is entirely different in kind from the spirituality of the Christian resting in and inspired by the Divine Presence. The man who says " I love God " or " I worship God " is poles apart from the man who says " I am Brahma," and the conception necessarily produces different fruits. The man who loves and worships God strives to know and do the will of God ; the man who wishes to say " I am Brahma " practises certain physical and mental exercises called *Yoga* until he has attained, but the actual effect of these exercises is apparently a kind of bodily and mental stupor.

It has been said that one of the pressing tasks of modern Christian theology is " to think out the relation between the twin conceptions of transcendence and immanence." The first step in such a task is clearly to describe what is meant by saying that God is immanent in the universe. Obviously the Christian does not mean what Rama Krishna meant and what millions and millions of people in India still mean. Vital energy manifesting itself in a myriad changing forms in every region of space, cannot be to a Christian the meaning of the immanence of God in His universe. Nor do we mean what the Vedantist means when he regards the Divine Immanence as consisting in the identity of what appears to be the human spirit with God. I am conscious of existence, so are millions of other people.

* *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad.*

But that self of which I and they are conscious is the one God, and all sense of separateness is only an illusion induced by the playfulness of the One. Immanence in this sense is positively rejected by the Christian faith. To the Christian then, the Divine Immanence can only mean that God is the constant and efficient Cause from which all at every moment derives its living. All that is in accordance with the will of God exists from moment to moment because He is thinking it. God's thought is necessarily God's act and nothing could continue to be if God ceased to think it. Nor can there be any local interval between God and His creatures, or we may put it, between God and His thoughts. So where the thought of God is, there the act of God is, and there God is immanent, there God is present. We have also to recognize that there are thoughts in the universe which are not God's, and that therefore there is a limit to His immanence. The only sense in which we can say that God is locally everywhere is when we understand it to mean that space itself is simply God's thought and apart from God's thought is not. If we speak of God living out beyond the shining of the farthest star, we only mean that if there is space beyond that star God is thinking that space, and where God's thought is there is God. It is not here to our purpose to consider what thoughts are not God's thoughts. In some respects this is not difficult for a Christian whose first conception of God is that He is perfect Holiness and perfect Love. We know for example that God is not immanent in a heart that is filled with hate.

The Mahratha poet Tukaram says: "Pity, patience, calm—that is God's dwelling place." The implication is that where there is cruelty, impatience, distraction, there God does not dwell. There is a definite limit to the Divine Immanence. In other respects it is difficult to fix limits; was God, we may ask, immanent in that cyclone which the other day devastated part of East Bengal, and killed some 4000 people? This is only one concrete illustration of thousands of similar occurrences in the history of the world, and they in their turn only point to the fact of the

great world conflict that is ever going on, whether it be called the struggle for life or evolution.

On a famous occasion a prophet felt intensely the presence of God : " The Lord passed by " he said. Simultaneously with this consciousness of the Presence there came a cyclone, " A great and strong wind rent the mountains and brake in pieces the rocks before the Lord." But the verdict was unhesitatingly, " The Lord was not in the wind."

In the mind of the prophet there was a limit to God's Immanence. To millions of people in India there would have been no question that some Divine Being was present in the cyclone, and that the destruction of rock or house or tree or human life was the direct action of the Deity. To millions in Africa a cyclone is the work of a green devil, called M'shimba-m'shamba, or the Swift Walker. Nor is their belief very different from the belief of the ordinary Hindu. In one case the action is the action of a god, and in the other it is the action of a devil, but the only practical distinction between a god and a devil is the distinction of name.

In the account in 1 Kings xix, the cyclone was succeeded by an earthquake, but again we are assured " The Lord was not in the earthquake." Lightning followed the earthquake, but again " The Lord was not in the fire." It is plain that the Divine Immanence does not mean to the prophet that all that happens in nature is due to the direct action of the Presence of God, or that it is a mode of His Presence or energy. The modern way of putting it is the way that John Stuart Mill put it when he said, " In sober truth nearly all the things which men are hanged for and imprisoned for doing to one another, are Nature's everyday performances " ; or as another said, " The power that launches earthquakes and arms cuttle fish has but a meagre relationship to the power that blesses infants and forgives enemies."

Probably then we must revise what we said above was the meaning of the Immanence to a Christian. We cannot

say without some limitation that God is the constant efficient cause from which all that is derives its being from moment to moment. The "all that is" must be limited by what a Christian knows of the Character of God, as revealed in Jesus Christ. And even here he must be content to leave unexplained large areas of what may be the Divine action. The earthquake seems blind and savage in its action, but it may be the means by which Divine love is working out some wide beneficent purpose.

Plague germs seem monstrously cruel, but in the universal scheme they may serve some counsel of love. It is impossible seriously to dogmatize as to how God's thoughts will be manifest in nature.

Only this we can be sure of that there are some thoughts there which are not His. No one has ever seen a cobra viciously turn, spread out its hood, hiss and strike, without being conscious that something devilish was present, a devil's thought not God's thought.

There is an instinctive shrinking not merely from something dangerous to the bodily life, but from something which has sprung from a morally ugly mind. The heavens declare the glory of God, that is, God's thought is manifest in them, but it is not clear at present that the cobra declares the glory of God. There are few minds so constituted that when they think of God in all and of all in God they do not limit the idea of immanence by excluding from it all that seems to contradict beauty and love. Such thoughts are amongst those permitted an entrance by God into His universe, but not willed by Him as their constant efficient cause. But we cannot lay too much stress on our ignorance in this respect *; we can only

* If we were to take a simple inhabitant of the jungle into a surgical theatre and show him a case of surgeon's instruments he might infer that they were cunningly devised instruments of torture. If he were to be present at some major operation he would probably regard the surgeons as monsters of cruelty. It is not inconceivable that if we were able to see the whole and not only a fragment we should know that things which seem incredibly cruel really serve a beneficent end.

point to the Christian instinct which undoubtedly fails to find God immanent, say, in things which seem evil. If Holy Scripture could say " but the Lord was not in the cyclone " we are probably justified in saying the Lord was not in the cobra. No one hesitates to deny the presence of God in a heart filled with envy, hatred and malice and all uncharitableness.

To anticipate a little the subject of the Divine Transcendence which is dealt with in the next chapter, and its relation to the Divine Immanence, the thinking out of which is said to be one of the most pressing tasks of Christian theology, the first principle by which the Christian's thought of God is governed is that the Divine Nature is absolutely distinct and separate from all created existence. The difference is not in degree or quality, as one creature may differ from another creature, but the difference is in the unique nature of His Being, which being absolute and self-dependent is incommensurable with created things. If a creature is made in the likeness of God, that likeness is in virtue of Divine communication. We must always be entirely unlike Him in that which is the essential and fundamental attribute of the Divine Nature, which is Its Independence. To say that God is transcendent is to say that His Nature cannot be brought into any class or category of existence.

There is no real difficulty in conceiving of the relationship of the transcendence of God to the immanence of God, because in the Christian doctrine of God transcendence and immanence are only two aspects of the same thing. It is God's transcendence which is immanent ; it is God's immanence which is transcendent. Nor is this a mere play on words. If we are right in describing the immanence of God in the universe as meaning that where the thought of God is, there the act of God is, and that as there is no local interval between God and His thoughts and acts, so God is necessarily present, then it is plain that the God who is thus immanently present is the God who by His essential nature is supreme and independent.

The Transcendence of God signifies the essential supremacy and independence of the Divine Nature, and it is the transcendent God between Whom and His creatures there is no local interval; it is this transcendent God Who sustains in being all that is in accordance with His will. God could indeed be God if He were not immanent in His universe, because God has no need of the universe; but He were not God in the Christian sense unless He were transcendent.

To conceive of a universe as necessary to God is to deny Godhead in the true sense. There are indeed doctrines of immanence which cannot be held in union with the doctrine of the Divine Transcendence, and this is why it is necessary to have a clear conception of what we mean by the Divine Immanence. To hold with Hegel that nature is a necessary phase in the self-realization of God is to deny the transcendence of God. It is true that Hegel attempts to retain the conception of God's transcendence by saying that God is both prior and posterior to nature in the order of thought though not necessarily in the order of time. Nature is identical with God, but God is intensively more than nature. This, however, is not true transcendence. Another way in which God's immanence is interpreted is by regarding spirit and matter, God and nature as identical. God is in nature and remains locally in it. He is not outside, for there is no outside. He is not essentially distinct from the universe, for He is constituted by the sum total of its parts and their relations, of which He is the underlying unity and reality. If the word is taken in its strict etymological meaning this is strictly what immanence seems to imply.

But Christian doctrine must repudiate the belief that God is locally present contained in the universe, for such a belief is inconsistent with the Christian creed, and, carried to its logical conclusion, destroys all moral responsibility in human beings. We can rightly conceive of God as manifested by nature, but we must always think of Him as essentially distinct and supreme. This does not mean

that God has two modes of Being, that He is partly in the universe and partly beyond the universe, but it does mean that the one supreme indivisible God is wholly where His thought is manifested in the universe, and wholly transcends it. He is *totum inter omnia et totum extra.*

To those then for whom God does not really exist, but is only the expression of the desire that He should exist, the consideration of the immanence of God should be a great help. Once let them grasp the thought that the universe is filled with God's thoughts, and that God is not absent from His thoughts, and then the Presence of God may become as real to them as the presence of the universe or the presence of other human beings.

An artist is absent from his picture because the picture represents the thoughts that he once had, but God cannot be absent from His creation because it represents the thoughts He is now thinking.

This then is the preliminary exercise in the practice of the Presence of God ; with silent concentration to recall that in Him we live and move and have our being ; that we have our being because from moment to moment He is thinking us and willing us to be. That if God were not present, that is, if He should cease to hold us in His thought we should cease to be. We ourselves are proofs of God's immanent reality. Or again, we may use any of the beauties of nature in meditation to make the Presence of God real to us. We gaze at a glorious sunset, and we see a changing panorama of colours, of gold and purple and red, and we are conscious of a particular sense of beauty, and of beauty as revealing the thought of God. The sunset is God's thought, and where God's thought is, there is God. These are simple illustrations of how we may practise the presence of God, using the thought of His immanence to make His presence real. It may be indeed a process of inference, but it is also at first the process by which we realize the presence of human personalities.

As in the case of human beings, the passage between inference and personal experience becomes so rapid that

inference and experience cannot be distinguished, so it may be with the inference of the Presence of God in the universe and with our experience of God. Most people are familiar with Brother Lawrence's little book of the Practice of the Presence of God, and will remember how he traced his conversion to seeing a tree stripped of its leaves and considering that within a little time the leaves would be renewed, and after that the flowers and fruit would appear. Apparently he at once became certain of the Presence of God, and remained so for the rest of his life. If we analyse what happened we may say that having become visibly conscious of the presence of energy in the tree he knew that that energy was sustained in being by the thought and will of God ; knowing this, he rightly could not think of God as distant from His thought, and so realized His immediate presence.

We may say that all conversion is realizing the Presence of God. When Jacob could say, " Surely the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not," then his conversion took place, and he became Israel.

When the Psalmist asks : " Whither shall I go then from Thy Spirit, or whither shall I go then from Thy presence ? If I climb up into heaven, Thou art there : if I go down to hell, Thou art there also. If I take the wings of the morning, and remain in the uttermost parts of the sea : even there also shall Thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me " ; he is not thinking of God spread out through the universe like ether subtly pervading everything, but he is thinking of all as being sustained in being by God's thought and will, and as therefore witnessing to the universality of His presence.

He was conscious of the Immanence of God.

CHAPTER II

THE DIVINE TRANSCENDENCE

IT has been already pointed out that to a man who believes that the energy at work in the universe is the very uncreated life of God there can be no difficulty in realizing His Divine Presence. He can no more fail to realize that presence than he can fail to recognize the presence of his fellow-men. Clearly it cannot be true of him that God is no more than a desire that He should exist.

Newman said that there were two self-luminous realities, God and ourselves. But though the energy is in itself invisible, yet that it exists is a self-luminous fact. God to the pantheist is undoubtedly not a desire that He should exist ; He is a self-luminous reality. The spiritual value, however, of such a recognition of the Divine presence is *nil*. It may be used and has been used as a pretext for denying that sin is sin.

It follows that what is really meant by the desire that God should exist is that a holy, righteous and living God should exist, and that we should be able to enter into personal, conscious fellowship with Him. That such a desire exists is in itself a remarkable testimony to the spiritual in man. It certainly makes it antecedently likely, if the world is rational at all, that there should exist the satisfaction of this desire. As far as we can see, most human desires have their counterparts in satisfaction. To hunger and thirst after righteousness is to be sure that righteousness is attainable. To be athirst for God in the sense in which the Psalmist thought of God points at any rate to the likelihood that God is and that He is a rewarder of them that seek Him.

But the history of man's religious thought shows that there has been in him much more than a desire. There has been, in addition, a widespread expectation that the Power in the universe must be moral.

The first element in the morality of this Power men looked for was not love, as the Christian might suppose, but justice. Somehow or other it must be, men have thought, that equity governed the issue of the affairs of men. If a man prospered in this life, it must be that he was being rewarded for his virtue and merit. If he suffered losses, or adversity dogged his footsteps, it must be that he was being punished for his sin. If the sufferer appeared to be a good man, it must be that he was a secret sinner who managed to conceal his misdemeanors from man's eye, but was receiving retaliation from the all-seeing Justice. The theory, of course, broke down. The Book of Job records the grave questionings which many must have felt as to the soundness of the theory when confronted by the facts of life, and leaves the solution to faith. "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him." Man's thought is directed to the greatness and incomprehensibility of God's activity. It is beyond man's understanding; "Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth?" But, of course, assumed as the very ground of this faith is the certainty that God must be righteous in His dealings with men.

The believer in rebirth gets over the difficulty of the punishment of apparently good men by making the stage of human life in which the drama of justice is being enacted immeasurably large. Justice is working itself out in the soul as it passes through thousands of lives. If it be said, "How unjust it is that a good man should suffer such adversity," the answer will inevitably come, "On the contrary, he is suffering exactly what he deserves, neither more nor less. The punishment must exactly fit the crime." The reference is, of course, not to the wrong that he may have done in this life, but to the hypothetical wrong of a former life. But again the theory, however unsatisfactory, does bear witness to the inextinguishable expectation that

somehow or other justice must be done in the universe, and when this is stated in theistic terms it means that we expect God to be righteous. " Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right ? "

But to say that we expect God to be righteous is to say that we can only conceive of Him as transcendent, for moral quality partakes of the nature of what is meant by transcendence. A religion of Divine Immanence, when immanence is used strictly and etymologically, can never satisfy or elevate the heart of man, because apart from its manifestations in human nature the immanent life or energy of the universe is apparently non-moral. We say that it is non-moral, but if we were to measure the activities of " nature " apart from man by man's moral standards, many, as we saw in the preceding chapter, would appear to be actually immoral. Whenever man has set out to find a way of release for himself, as, for instance, Gautama did when oppressed by the sight of the misery of men, he has looked for that release not by discovering the way of God in nature, but by seeking within his own soul to find the truth.

" Nature " seemed to him either illusory or opposed in its methods to his own moral sense. The Stoics tried to conform to a universal law or system of nature, but the best of them ended in suicide.

Essential to Gautama's way of release is the practice of *ahimsa*, that is of *non-injury*, especially of non-injury to animal life. The great Buddhist Emperor Asoka, by whose efforts Buddhism became for a short time dominant in India, laid great stress in his edicts on the virtue of *ahimsa*, but no one could possibly maintain that *ahimsa* could be learned from nature. Necessarily then Buddhism left the Divine Immanence altogether out of its system. It was really a revolt against religion as found in the belief in the Divine Immanence when it was carried out logically ; as all systems of pagan or pantheistic worship have carried it out.

The same was the case with Jainism, which is a way of

life older even than Buddhism. The standard of moral life set by Jainism at its best is really high, far higher than in any other "way" found in India.* But again, it is not the introduction of a new religion, of new conceptions of God, for Jainism like Buddhism frankly leaves the Deity altogether out. It is rather a revolt against religion, against the methods of the immanent divinity that is found in the universe.

So we are driven to the conclusion that if there be any religion which can satisfy the needs and aspirations of man it must have been revealed. He who is behind the phenomena or in the phenomena must speak, or we cannot know Him to be our Friend and our God.

Christians believe that He has spoken, and the supreme record of that speech "by divers portions and in divers manners" is in the Bible. God spoke through the prophets provisionally and fragmentally; God spoke in His Son, finally and completely. But it follows that the self-manifestation will largely be a revelation of the Divine Transcendence. The primary thought about God will be not that He is in all, but that He is above all; not that He is "Almighty, Almighty, Almighty," but that He is "Holy, Holy, Holy." The thought of the might of God came naturally to man overwhelmed as he was by the power of nature; it met him everywhere and at every moment; might was immanent in the universe. But Holiness is a form of transcendence. The truth that the Power of God was a holy power, working for righteousness, could only come to man by revelation. That is why in the Bible so much stress is laid on the Transcendence of God, and comparatively little is laid upon His immanence in the universe. The latter was a truth man could discover in some form by inference; the

* The Jains realize that holiness is inward. Even for a householder it is prescribed that he shall "always be intent on defeating the six interior enemies and controlling his five senses." The six interior enemies are passion, anger, greed, pride, excessive exultation, and envy. They sum up everything under the heading of the Three Jewels: Right Knowledge, Right Faith, and Right Conduct. Great stress is laid on humility, and the danger of the gradual growth of pride.

former was a truth he could only know by revelation. It is this emphasis on the Transcendence of God in the Bible that sometimes misleads Eastern thinkers to suppose that Christians conceive of God as what they call "an anthropomorphic and extra-cosmic God." Here, for instance, is a passage from a book by a leader of the Brahmo Samaj in India who passed away recently. "This conception"—i.e. the conception of God which he has been trying to give—"is vastly different from the current Christian idea of an anthropomorphic and extra-cosmic God, residing in a certain place called Heaven, knowing the affairs of men by reason of His Omniscience, and ruling the world by reason of His Almightiness. To us, Hindus of the East, brought up under the influence of the Upanishads and of the Gita, such a conception is childish. To conceive an extra-cosmic Being is to give up His infinitude, from which our Eastern minds shrink in disgust."

A great deal is made of the expression "Our Father, which art in Heaven," the assumption always being that Heaven means an exalted locality situated at some distance from the earth, in which God has His dwelling-place. No doubt there are many hymns commonly used in our services which do give the impression that God is ruling the universe from a distance, but has such infinitely long sight and hearing that He sees and hears all that is to be seen and heard. Children are taught to sing, "There's a Friend for little children above the bright blue sky," which certainly they might interpret to mean that God was not present here but was spatially absent from them. But, after all, presence can have but little meaning if it does not mean freedom of direct and immediate communication. If a child refers to Some One as above the bright blue sky, and is also convinced that he can speak to Him with the utter certainty that he will be heard, as though he were speaking to his mother while he sits on her lap, the phrase "above the bright blue sky" need not convey so much the sense of great distance as of great exaltation. In other words, it is a picturesque way of declaring God's Transcendence to a

child. It is curious and interesting that a leader of Unitarians among Indians, who probably continually made a study of the Bible, should at once fasten on those passages in which God's Transcendence is emphasized and stigmatize the conception as childish, for it is in the childhood of the human race that the Divine Immanence is most realized and not His Transcendence.

But transcendence is not the only aspect of the Divine Being which finds a place in the Bible. We have already quoted from Psalm cxxxix in which what we may call the transcendent immanence of God is set forth in words of simplicity and beauty, "Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit, or whither shall I fly from Thy presence?" But the Old Testament yields other passages which might have convinced any careful student that it was not an extra-cosmic God whom the Israelites worshipped, "Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, Whose name is Holy: I dwell in the high and lofty place." Could the Divine Transcendence be more sublimely expressed, "that inhabiteth eternity"? The prophet goes on, "with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit"; could the intimacy of the Divine Immanence be declared with more lucidity and tenderness? He who inhabiteth eternity dwelleth with the humble. It is the prophet's answer to the question of the relation of the transcendence to immanence.

But the New Testament puts the matter beyond doubt. The transcendence taught in every page which declares God to be eternal, in every verse which declares Him to be Father, is balanced by the truth that the Father's presence is here. "One God and Father of all, Who is over all," there is transcendence; "and through all and in all," there is immanence. St. Paul teaches that Christ ascended —and the Ascension is the very symbol of transcendence— but that He ascended, not that He should be distant, raised above the universe in space, but "that He might fill all things." Again, we have the teaching of transcendent immanence, and in this passage applied to God incarnate in Christ. The same reference is in the great passage in

Colossians in which "The image of the invisible God" is declared to be the instrument of creation as well as of redemption; "In Him were all things created, in the heavens and upon the earth, things visible and things invisible . . . all things have been created through Him, and unto Him; and He is before all things, and in Him all things consist" (which the R.V. margin explains to mean "hold together").

To speak of God as Creator is to speak of Him as transcendent; He does not depend upon the universe; the universe depends upon Him; to speak of all things holding together in Him is to speak of Him as immanent, as the constant efficient Cause from which the whole at every moment derives its being. When the Church is described it is "The fullness of Him that filleth all in all."*

"Blessed," writes St. Augustine in his *Confessions*, "is the man, O God, who loves Thee, and his friend in Thee, and his enemy for Thy sake. For he alone loses none dear to him, to whom all are dear in Him who never can be lost. And who is that but God, the God who made heaven and earth, and fills them, because it was by filling that He made them." When he says, "God made heaven and earth," he declares his faith in a transcendent God; when he says that He fills heaven and earth, he declares his faith in an immanent God.

Thus far in this chapter it has been pointed out that the desire that God should exist must mean the desire that a holy, righteous and loving God should exist, and in the revelation of the righteousness of God we find the revelation of His Transcendence. But the doctrine of creation also is a necessary doctrine if we are to hold to the truth of transcendence.

If the world be a necessary or involuntary emanation from His substance, God may be immanent, He certainly is not transcendent. The difficulty as regards the state-

* See note in Dean Armitage Robinson's *Commentary on Ephesians*, where the passage is rendered, "the fullness of Him Who is being all in all fulfilled."

ment of a doctrine of creation arises from the impossibility of defining philosophically the relation of the temporal order to the eternal. Yet if God's Transcendence is to be secured, we must resolutely maintain the truth that the universe in its present form does not belong to the eternal order, that it is not an inevitable emanation from God, and that there was no eternal self-existent entity apart from God which provided the material on which He worked.

The doctrine of God's Transcendence as revealed in the fact of creation is not affected by the question as to whether His priority to the universe is a causal priority and not a temporal one ; it is enough if we hold that the universe is dependent for its existence solely on the Will of God.

A God Who is righteous, and a God Who is the Creator and therefore the supreme Ruler, is a God Who is transcendent. Without these two truths, belief in the Divine Immanence carried to its logical limits can only lead to moral and spiritual confusion. For it is only those who believe in God's Transcendence who count sin to be sin. No doubt there is an attempt in the modern teaching of pantheism to combine the thought of immanence with the thought of love, but the conception of sin is abandoned. Here is a passage from a lecture given in America by Swami Baba Premanand Bharati, who claimed that in a year in that country he made three thousand disciples.

" The soul and God are the same thing. The whole of creation is one vast living being just as you or I. The whole living being, of which we are parts, connected parts, pulsating with the same pulse, throbbing with the same feeling, with the vast one life called creation or the universe. Then concentrate your mind upon that soul, which is, as I have said, the part of God in you, the part of the all-pervading God, the God that pervades all creation, and that God that pervades you is love ; and that part of God that pervades you is your soul, and that is the soul that we call ' I.' "

Here, of course, the teacher is simply ignoring sin and ignoring all that contradicts love in the soul ; he is un-

willing to carry out his doctrine of immanence to its logical conclusion.

But another of these teachers of the Divine Immanence without the Divine Transcendence, known by the name of the Swami Vivekananda, addressing an American audience said plainly, "The Hindu refuses to call you sinners. Ye are the children of God, the sharers of immortal bliss, holy and perfect beings. Ye divinities on earth, sinners! It is a sin to call a man so; it is a standing libel on human nature." One more illustration may be given of the moral confusion which is inevitable when the doctrine of immanence is taught apart from the doctrine of transcendence. In a book published in Madras called *Man's Greatest Discovery*, by Swami Vallinayakam, occurs the following passage: "They are the commandments of God—the desires and passions of man. It is, therefore, that none can and will transgress them. God's commandments are not one and the same to all, for no two stand on one and the same level: so the commandments too differ. . . . One's impulse leads one to commit theft; another's adultery. The impulses which these two men feel come from the Most High, and as such are commandments to them. They cannot but abide by them, and they have no power to violate them—therefore, dear reader, forgive those who you think do wrong or commit sins. They are exerting themselves much, only for fulfilling the commandments of God."

The passages quoted bear indisputable testimony to the danger of the doctrine of immanence. They have been quoted to show that moral confusion is not an imaginary apprehension of a student in his study, but the inevitable result and the logical result either of ignorance of or disbelief in the doctrine of the Divine Transcendence, a result which will become active in the lives of men.*

In Western lands it may take other forms; it may be

* A most terrible illustration of this is found in the Sakta cult in India, in which the doctrine of immanence as a religion is carried out in what is called Vámachári worship.

described as self-expression or the like, but in its essence it is the same thing. It is the recognition of force active everywhere, some of it in ourselves, some of it in the stars, but one universal force in all and through all. The moment the presence of moral force in man is recognized, at that moment there comes the expectation of the Divine Transcendence, and that expectation can only be fulfilled in a revealed religion. It is when God speaks to men and they know Him to be love and wisdom as well as power, then it is that the thought of the Divine Immanence helps to make His presence real to them, and they can make Dr. Illingworth's words their own: "He must be conceived as ever present to sustain and animate the universe, which thus becomes a living manifestation of Himself; no mere machine, or book, or picture, but a perpetually sounding voice."

Or as it may seem preferable to express it, "Where His thought is, there is He."

CHAPTER III

THE DIVINE TRANSCENDENCE AND REVELATION

IN the old world everywhere men had much the same kind of thoughts; they interpreted the universe and its relationship to themselves in much the same way. Roughly speaking, it is true now to say that only in India and Africa do these thoughts widely survive to-day. Everywhere else most men have rejected pantheism with its accompaniment of polytheism; that is to say, they have rejected the naked doctrine of immanence. No one outside of India and Africa continues to interpret Divinity in terms of millions of deities; no one finds the Divine expressed in the cholera bacillus or in smallpox. But in the old world the mass of people everywhere did so,—everywhere, that is, except amongst one little, politically insignificant people. This people stood practically alone in the world as trustees of an entirely different kind of faith.

Professor Ball, the astronomer, has pointed out that if a geographical globe be turned in such a position that the greatest amount of land surface is displayed, and a finger be put on the point which seems roughly to be the centre, it will be found that the finger is placed on that little strip of land called Palestine, which almost joins together the three great continents of Asia, Africa and Europe.

The people who lived in it were politically insignificant; in art and architecture they were far behind many of the other peoples of the world. They had produced no great systems of philosophy nor were they in any sense conspicuous as leaders of thought. Yet they differed from the whole of the rest of mankind in one important matter, and that was religion. To put it quite simply, what they held

was this : that God was one ; that the Divine Nature was not an immanent, all-pervading energy, which might be multiplied into or expressed in myriads of deities, but that God was essentially, eternally one. But much more remarkable than this, for Greek thought by a process of inference had arrived at a belief in the unity of the Divine Being, and Hindu pantheists who maintain the doctrine of naked immanence will frequently profess their belief that God is one, this little people who lived at the centre of the earth's surface declared that above all things God was holy, and that in relation to men His chief concern was with their moral conduct. The only possible way of serving Him aright was in what we should call in modern days a life of integrity and uprightness. No sooner did they declare this great foundation of their creed, " Hear, O Israel, the Lord thy God is one," than they went on to set forth the great moral law of duty to God and duty to man. It may be said almost without qualification that nowhere else in the world did men connect holiness in this sense with the Divine nature or suppose that the gods had anything to do with the way men treated one another ; their one concern was the way in which men treated them. This did not mean that men had no ideas of morality, but they based their ideas of morality on social convenience and not on the constitution of the Divine Being. But with Israel the thought was primary ; God was a holy God and those who had taken His Name upon them must be those who loved their neighbour as themselves. There were two other characteristic marks of their religion : one was their extraordinary and quite unexpected abhorrence of any attempt to represent the Deity in an image, and the other the belief that though they could not make any likeness of God, yet eventually, when men were ready for it, He would give them That which perhaps we may be not far wrong in saying that they somehow vaguely and indefinitely felt would be " The Image of the Invisible God," " the Brightness of His Glory and the express Image of His Person."

How came it that this one people of mankind thus

differed strangely from the rest? The answer they gave was that they did not discover God, God discovered Himself to them. He was not to them a God only apprehended by inference, but a God known by experience. They would have said, "We could not have discovered God, for no man could ever discover God; what we know, we know by revelation; we know it, because God Himself has spoken; God's unity and goodness are truths which He alone has taught."

If men asked how God had revealed Himself, the answer of Israel was clear and explicit. They pointed to certain men, who said: "The Word of the Lord came unto me." What these men meant was apparently something like this: they were conscious of a Personality, supreme and dominating and altogether holy, impressing certain facts upon their minds and spirits. Of one thing they were certain, that the truths had not come from within themselves; they were not the products of their own thought or imagination. The truths were instilled into them by contact with this majestic and supreme Personality. It was not a Voice heard from a distance, it was a Voice within. It sounded in their souls, and they knew it was not their word but God's Word that they heard. It was transcendent inasmuch as it came from without; it was immanent inasmuch as it entered and sounded within. What they heard they were compelled to try to express to others, and there was something also in those others by which they recognized that it was God's Voice transmitted to them. It was indeed the Word of the Lord and not the word of man that had come to them; there was something in that Word which marked it as utterly beyond the mind of man.

We must notice especially that revelation was the actual contact of Personality with personality, of the supreme, uncreated Personality, Whom we call God, with created personalities, and that through that contact came knowledge which could be handed on to others. These men never discussed, as we discuss, the Personality of God. They assumed it as they assume their own, and it was to

them the greatest of all realities. They did not attempt to analyse the meaning of personality; they assumed that everybody knew by experience enough of what it meant. It was enough for them to know that personality meant not less than consciousness and will and the capacity to love. In their contact with the Divine Personality they found these and were content.

It is obvious that personalities live and grow by contact with other personalities, and this contact is life, and nothing else is really life. There is a saying that a hermit will either be an angel or a beast, and the meaning is that in loneliness apart from his fellow-men he must sink to the level of animal life only, unless he is constantly in contact with and in fellowship with the supreme Personality of God. A solitary person living in permanent loneliness necessarily loses the quality of personality.

It is said, and probably with great truth, that the fundamental problem presented to religious teachers to-day is the dimness of God-consciousness among modern men. It has been described in this way: the Christian Church appears to the majority of men to be a collection of officious, but well-meaning, people who insist on looking out lists of trains for others who do not wish to travel; they are offering to men things which they do not in the least feel they need. People in general, so it is asserted, may be divided into three classes: at one extreme there are the keenly religious, that is, those who are either conscious of God, or the need of God; at the other extreme there are the anti-religious, that is, those who are actively hostile to the idea of God; between these two extremes are the majority of men who are indifferent because they are both unconscious of God and of any need of Him; "he careth not for God, neither is God in all his thoughts." From time to time there are movements from both of the two latter classes into the class of the keenly religious; and when these movements occur they are described as conversions, so that a converted man is one who has become conscious of God's Presence, or at the least conscious of the need of

striving to realize that Presence. But the numbers of the converted do not much reduce the proportions of the three classes. The indifferent remain the vast majority. If this is so, that is, if there be this supreme, all-holy, all-beautiful Personality, present and waiting to take us into fellowship with Himself, and men are unconscious of this Presence, with no desire for His fellowship and no sense of loss, it is the greatest disaster that can befall our race. Nothing can be compared with a tragedy like this.

Some urge, as we have seen, that the possession of God-consciousness is only for the few. Genuine mystics indeed may be rare, if we mean by a mystic one who apprehends the Presence of God more directly and securely than he apprehends the presence of a human friend. But to say that there is never anything more than inference in most men's belief in God seems to be a misinterpretation of facts, which seem rather to point to something beyond inference. There seems to be in man a kind of inborn instinct which makes him ready to receive a belief in God, and however this instinct may have been generated in the human race it almost certainly exists in the majority. Most have but little power of drawing correct inferences from their observation of external things, and yet most have a sense, however vague and dim, that God, a moral Personality, exists. This points to some measure of experience or belief in other people's experience. To believe in other people's experience is to believe in revelation, and so many are ready to believe in revelation that it seems likely that other people's experience recalls something of their own; vague, dim, uncertain as that experience may have been. It seems that man has the faculty of finding God not only by his mind, that is, by inference, but also by his spirit, that is by experience. Only we must remember that of all faculties the spiritual faculty is the finest and the most sensitive. If it be neglected it becomes dull and its impressions necessarily become dim; if it be used it becomes finer and more sensitive day by day. Using it, men help others to find it in themselves. Religion is caught rather than taught.

Men go plodding along the dusty roads of life with their eyes fixed on the ground, but if they see others looking up they will look up also, and looking up they see no longer mud and dirt but the colours of the sunset and the radiance of the sky. No man can give another spiritual eyes and ears, but those who have them may be led to use them. From becoming conscious that others are undergoing a certain experience they may be put in the way of understanding something of the same kind.

Revelation then is the contact of the Supreme uncreated Personality with created personalities; these receptive personalities were able to convince others that the Word of the Lord had come to them, and that the knowledge which they had thus received was not the product of their own minds but had come into their minds from contact with God. To this revelation they demanded the response of faith. At some stage or other in the life of faith there must be human judgment. The individual must decide for himself whom he will trust and follow. It may be an infallible Church or an infallible Person or an infallible Book which claims his trust, but in the last resort the surrender must be the act of his own will and judgment. If something is brought to a man and declared to be sweet and nourishing the first thing he will do is to taste it. If some men declare that the Word of the Lord has come to them the first thing that others will do will be to test their message. Why should they suppose that it has come from God? They will be right. As a condition of all faith is a fundamental act of private judgment, for faith is the completion and crown of reason.

Now, as we have seen, the main and supreme record of that contact of the Uncreated Personality with human personalities is found for us in the collection of writings which we call the Bible. It is not, of course, the revelation itself, but it is the record of the revelation. It is the long-drawn-out story imparted "by divers portions and in divers manners" of how God dealt with a certain people, and in the process of His dealings disclosed Himself, His

purpose, His character and His will. This collection of writings extends probably over some thousands of years, and, as we should expect, the books are extremely varied in character. Some are the primitive stories of the origin of our race and of how the evil that is in it came to be there. Some are the religious songs of a people to whom the Presence of God was more real than the presence of their fellow-men. Some are the sermons delivered by their greatest teachers. But directly we speak of a collection we imply a collector. Writings do not come together of themselves ; some person or persons, or some society of men must have gathered them together. If they gathered them together and declared that in them we had the record of how God disclosed His character and purpose it must have been because they believed that they were possessed of a faculty by which they could test and recognize truth as surely as they could recognize light. In other words, when the revelation of Divine Transcendence comes to us in the Bible, the book does not drop out of the sky upon our earth, as the image of the Ephesian Artemis is said to have done, but it comes to us attested by the experience and the witness of a body of men. What we call " Inspiration " is not only to be looked for in those who recorded their experience, who could say " The Word of the Lord came unto me," but in those who accepted the message and interpreted it to men. This process must ever go on if the Church is a living society and not merely the hereditary keeper of ancient records. We shall never prove the Transcendence of God to men by presenting them with the Bible, and saying : " Here is the Word of God, the Book which proves Him to be All-Holy, and All-Mighty ; accept it and obey it, and heaven will be yours." What we must do is bid them search the Scriptures whether these things are so. Or we can put it in another way ; we can say : " The experience of the Church in age after age testifies that in this record God reveals Himself ; you cannot idly fling aside that experience as of no account ; test it for yourself."

A man must do it for himself, but he can be helped. We can help him first of all by getting him to put away all mistaken presuppositions about the Bible. When men are convinced that it is possible or likely that God will reveal Himself through written words they almost invariably make presuppositions as to the form and manner in which He will do it. Some will assume that the book of revelation must be dictated word for word, as an author dictates chapter after chapter to a secretary. Others will suppose that though there may be room for human co-operation with the Divine Spirit yet that human co-operation will necessarily be preserved from every possible kind of error ; whether the writer is dealing with natural phenomena or facts of history, that he will be supernaturally enlightened in such a way that the history which he writes or the scientific explanation which he gives must necessarily correspond exactly with the truth. Others are certain that each sentence from beginning to end must be of equal value and weight ; as, for instance, that the prescription to the Israelites not to eat pork is as much inspired as the words : " The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us." Now these ideas of the verbal inspiration of the Bible, of the equal divinity of all its parts, and of the infallibility of the explanations of natural phenomena or historical narratives, are merely human presuppositions. They are not laid down by the society through whom the Bible has come to us. They have been presupposed by individuals who have handed on their presuppositions to others, until it has become widely believed that the Christian religion was so bound up with them that with them it fell or with them it stood. Of course such a procedure was in the highest degree unscientific. If we approach nature with fixed presuppositions we make no progress in knowledge. We must approach with open minds and observe and discover. If we begin with theories we must be ready to fling away our theories directly we find that they do not square with the facts. The same principles must govern our use of the Bible. One proposition and one proposition only has

the Church laid down about the Bible as the fruit of her experience. It is the simplest of propositions, that the Holy Spirit "spake through the prophets." Men are to test that truth for themselves. We are not told that God has dictated the Bible, nor are we told that all its parts are of equal divinity. Nowhere is it asserted that the writers have been miraculously preserved from errors in history or physics or biology. The one announcement is that the Holy Spirit has spoken through the prophets; that is, revelation is a fact; God has spoken and God will speak. Those who work among the educated classes of non-Christian peoples, as, for instance, in India, know how greatly their difficulties are increased by these mistaken presuppositions as to the manner of revelation. Almost invariably the assumption is that Christians make the same claim for the Bible as Moslems make for the Koran or Hindus make for the Vedas, that each word and syllable has been dictated by the mouth of God and accurately written down. If they can succeed in proving a flaw or verbal contradiction in the book they have demonstrated that it is not Divine. In Western countries some of the doubt and religious bewilderment of the day has sprung from the conviction that these presuppositions about the Bible were dogmas of the Christian creed. It has been believed that the essential elements of the faith depended upon the literal acceptance of every word of the Old Testament as the guide of life. The result has been that many have rejected the faith and have starved within sight of the food they needed. Yet all the time there was within the Bible itself the key to its understanding. It was given, so we are told, not to teach physics or biology or history, for in these branches of study God has endowed us with the brains to discover truth for ourselves; but it was given "by inspiration of God, and it is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished in all good works."

Not only have we this key, but our Lord Jesus Christ Him-

self has taught us how to use it. He upon Whose word the authority of the Old Testament so largely depends is He Who has set us the example of a great discrimination. It is He Who has taught us to see that God's disclosure of Himself was necessarily gradual, little by little, step by step, that practices permitted or at any rate not condemned in a rude age of a people's development were violations of the Divine will in the case of a more advanced and enlightened age.

It has been said that Revelation is the contact of the uncreated Personality with created personalities, and that through that contact God has spoken. A transcendent God is a God Who is not less than personal, and the personality of God once granted self-revelation will be expected. It may be that we infer it from what we see in human personalities. If we watch a mother's way with her baby we shall see that it is a continual process of revealing herself to her child. Her one desire is to evoke a response of recognition and love. She makes strange noises of affection, utters simple sounds, and is ever looking into the baby's face to catch the first glimpse of answering affection. From hour to hour, from day to day the process of self-revelation goes on. She does not speak in long sentences and with difficult words to the child, but uses the simplest possible means of utterance. Then comes a day when the child is entirely aware of his mother and holds intercourse with her ; he begins to answer love with love. The revelation of personality has begun. If we question ourselves as to the exact moment when we first became aware that we had a mother no answer is possible. We only know that personality gradually revealed itself to personality, and still reveals. Mothers do not reveal themselves to their children by writing to them a complete letter with all the information about themselves and their wishes and purposes duly written down ; they lead them on little by little to know them. This is why we are prepared to expect that the knowledge of God will come to men by slow degrees, and that it will come because they undergo experiences for

which they cannot account without a personal God. We shall not be surprised if some of the men who first experienced God were men whose moral standard was far below what we know to be right to-day. Just as the baby imperfectly gets his first ideas of what his mother wills, so in the childhood of the race men could only learn a little at a time, and as the race grew up God was able to teach them more and more.

Our faith that God immanent and transcendent has spoken is crowned by the faith that God is speaking and will speak, or in other words that the Supreme Personality is still making Himself known to persons. Here we have one of the great uses of the Bible for ourselves. It is one of the chief means by which God really present speaks now to men. It is not to be used only as a record of what He has said in the past ; it is the instrument through which He speaks with a living Voice to-day. Through it we may be assured of the existence of God not by inference only but by experience. A book may convince you that a doctrine is true, but no ordinary book can speak to us as spirit to spirit ; only a Person can do that. It is attested by the experience of millions that the Supreme Personality uses this Book to speak with living tones to the souls of men. As the organ without the breath of power and the personality of the musician stands mute and dumb, so the Book has no message for those who do not seek to hear the Holy Spirit's living voice using the records of the experiences of men. The Bible thus becomes alike the instrument and the revealer of the Real Presence of God. We do well to employ all the resources of scholarship to discover the meaning of the sacred text. Criticism rightly searches into origin and composition and date. We welcome all that sober scholarship can teach us. But all this is only as though we were instructed in the mechanism of the organ, the various materials of the pipes or the order of its keys and stops. Such instruction will not give us music. To get music we must have the musician actually present ; we must have personality at work. So also is it

with the Bible. It is presented to us as the instrument of the Living God. When we test it and use it we find by experience that God lives, is present and is speaking, and is the constant Companion of the spirits who seek Him.

A writer in the New Testament, writing to encourage storm-tossed souls in sore perplexity, warns them by the example of the fathers of their race. At the end he tells them that this which he quotes is much more than an ancient record of men long passed away ; it is the present instrument of the Spirit's voice. " For living," he says, " living is the Word of God and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, a discerner of the thoughts and instincts of the heart."

The purpose of meditation is not to produce thoughts but to receive them, and the Bible is given to us for meditation thereon, because through it the living, present, immanent and transcendent God still speaks to living men.

CHAPTER IV

THE SACRAMENT OF THE DIVINE PRESENCE

IN the previous chapter reference was made to the striking contrast between the religious beliefs of practically the whole of mankind and those of that little people who occupied a tiny strip of that fertile and beautiful land between sea and desert almost uniting three great continents. But one important element in that contrast was left aside. The peoples of the world were ever looking to the past ; the golden age was gone. It was in the past that *rishis* and prophets spoke and the gods themselves moved freely and often openly among men. This spirit of melancholy retrospect is still the mark of the great non-Christian religions. Hinduism is forever bewailing the glories of the past ; even the Vedas, so it is taught by the orthodox, have had to be curtailed because the degeneration of the Brahman mind rendered them incapable of interpretation. The age in which we now live is the age of sin and the gods have deserted the wicked earth. With Islam much the same is the case ; the age of light has passed. But Israel was ever looking to the future. Not in the days that were gone but in the days that were to come would the glory be revealed, and all flesh should see the salvation of God. There is a vivid contrast in this respect between what have been called " The Sacred Books of the East " and the Bible. In the one there is hope, flaming and unquenchable, looking to the future, " the best is yet to be " ; in the others there is retrospect, sombre and sad, " the best is past and gone." One meaning of " Jehovah " may be " the Lord of the Future."

This flaming hope of Israel is connected, strangely enough, with that fierce and at first sight utterly un-

accountable resentment and hostility against any attempt to picture the Divine in form or image. The Hebrew treated the idol-maker as a murderer and stoned the life out of him. This hatred of making false images of God was in reality due to the dim unexpressed consciousness that there could be no image of God until God Himself gave that image ; or to put it in our own religious language, they had some faint conception of the truth that they would be given a great Sacrament of God. For what we mean by Sacrament is an outward sign, apprehensible by the senses, of an inward verity, which is actually there, and that inward Reality is God. Man's age-long search has been for the Sacrament of God. It is pathetic to read of the simple-hearted animist going up the strangely shaped rock or to the plant and tree and whispering wistfully, " Art Thou there ? Art Thou there ? " He is out looking for a Sacrament of God. All the strange and often hideously repulsive perversions seen in Hindu temples, and sometimes by the roadside in India, professing to represent the Divine, are mistaken human attempts to discover the Sacrament of God.

Let us pass in thought to that little land where God was believed to be both One and Holy. Once there trod the roads of that land and moved freely amongst men One Who was Himself obviously man. He came, as we should say, of poor and humble folk ; He had toiled with His hands to earn His daily bread. He wore no strange garb, practised no public austerities, and was just man amongst men. Yet though He trod the earth and noted the flight of birds, and the grace of flowers, called attention to the sunsets and fondled little children, His consciousness of that world, the inner world, unseen by us, was as real as His consciousness of this. If He saw the children here, He saw the angels there ; if He talked with men and women here, He talked with spirits of just men there. Two worlds indeed were His, and He brought in Himself the forces of that other world, the world in which the Father reigned supreme, to the rescue and redemption of this. This was His Good

News : " The Kingdom of God is at hand, the Kingdom of God is come upon you, the Kingdom of God is amongst you." God in His love and wisdom and power had come into the world in a new way. Wherever He moved among men the forces of that Kingdom revealed themselves ; the covetous gave up his avarice and followed Him in poverty ; the sensual lost his lust and followed Him in purity ; the proud surrendered his pride and followed Him in humility Nor was it only moral victories of personalities re-created and re-formed that He won ; the powers of the Kingdom of God, entering anew into the kingdom of the world, revealed their antagonism to disease and pain. There were thoughts in the universe, so He taught us, that were not His Father's thoughts, and He brought the power to overcome them and cast them out.

In Chapter I it was pointed out that there seemed to be in " nature " ugly powers, hostile to men, apparently malicious, cruel or senseless in their operation. No doctrine of the Divine Immanence can co-exist with the doctrine of the Divine Transcendence which does not exclude these powers from being the fruit of the Divine Presence. To Jesus Christ evil of every kind was bound up with personality : " The Prince of this world cometh and hath nothing in Me." It was Satan who had bound the poor woman and crippled her activity. Jesus Christ did not find God immanent in disease nor was He the minister of pain. They were not His Father's thoughts and He had come to cast them out. What are called His miracles were the energies of His all-holy Spirit conquering the energies of evil personality, and revealing that there was no hostile power which should not eventually be overcome because the Kingdom of God was here.

Jesus Christ was obviously man ; the most frequent of His titles was " Son of Man." But men mostly carry in their individuality marks of a particular race or country ; they are French or Chinese or Indian, as the case may be. But when men think of Him there is no thought of nationality ; He does not seem to have one. This is one of the

perfections of His human nature ; He is not Hebrew or Asiatic or European ; He is cosmopolitan, a citizen of the world, man with no special characteristics of a special race to divide Him from the rest. He is as near to the Englishman as He is to the Hebrew ; He is as near to the Indian as He is to the Frenchman. He is next-of-kin to every child of man and the nearest relation to all the children of God. That was His claim ; He was no mere Jew, but He was man. There are little children playing in the streets of London or Paris or Calcutta ; " Whosoever receiveth one such little child in My Name, receiveth Me." There are men and women all over the world striving to do God's will, white or yellow or brown ; " Whosoever doeth the will of God the same is My brother, and My sister, and My mother."

Perhaps still more unexpected is that He gathers into Himself the characteristic beauties of womanhood as well as those of manhood. No one adjective can be found to express the chief qualities of His human character. What we can do for most of the great ones of mankind, for Gautama or Socrates or Mazzini, cannot be done for Christ. If an adjective is to be found for Him it has to be "Catholic"; He is the Catholic Jesus. The reason seems to be that all the excellences of human character, masculine excellences and feminine excellences meet in Him. Manly virtues and womanly virtues find in Him their highest exemplar. The life of activity and the life of passivity are in harmony in Him. All who have put themselves within the power and fascination of His personality are conscious of this catholicity of moral perfection : the glories of mankind and the glories of womanhood are alike shining in Him. The exquisite purity and patience of the woman meet in one Personality the unfaltering courage and enterprise of the man.

Thus far only the outward part of this supreme Sacrament has been touched upon, but ever the question has arisen : " What think ye of Christ ? " " What manner of man is this ? " " Whom do men say that I, the Son of Man, am ? " The question forces itself upon men's minds.

"What manner of man is this?" Is there an inward part of the Sacrament? What is that inward part? What has He brought in Himself to men? Of course the question was answered gradually: it could only be answered as men were able to receive what He had to give. At first they followed Him as Teacher and Guide. "No man ever spoke like this man." He spoke as one who saw and knew; heaven was as familiar to Him as earth and the Father closer than the air. His Personality drew them as a magnet must draw steel: "Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy laden," and they came and they found rest. Life precedes thought. Man lives first and thinks and interprets after: religion comes before theology, and rightly. The faith is there but the faith has not become systematized and articulate in creeds. But the day comes when reverence becomes worship, when love is expressed in adoration, when faith issues in complete surrender. Men find the inward part of the Sacrament, and they cry, knowing only partly what they mean, "My Lord and my God." The Kingdom of God has come; the glory of God has broken through into the world in a new way, and Jesus is His Sacrament to men. The poor animist goes to the stone or tree and whispers, "God, art Thou there? Art Thou there?" Christendom bows before the Man Jesus, crucified, arisen, glorified, and her pæan of adoring faith ascends. "Thou art there. Thou art there."

It is to be noticed that there are two main stages in this pilgrim's progress of faith. There is the first stage when men strive to share the faith of Jesus. They take Him as their Teacher; they would share with Him His consciousness of the Father, His security in His love, His unquestionable certainty of immortality. They take Him as their moral example; they strive to make their lives such as He would approve. This is the first stage; their effort is to make the faith of Jesus their faith, it may be described as acceptance of the outward part of the Sacrament and no more. The second stage is when men place their faith *in* Jesus. The greatest and best of men cannot claim the

whole obedience of the human spirit ; the most beautiful of human characters cannot exact the allegiance of worship ; the wisest of men can make no promise of the gift of the eternal ; obedience, adoration and worship, in the full sense can only be given to God. When men have placed their faith in Jesus, then they have found the inner part of the Sacrament ; they have found God and been found of Him. We cannot prove this : we can only experience it, and by experience know it to be true. We can summon witnesses from every quarter of the globe and from every generation of mankind, but they can only point out the Way.

John Stuart Mill declares that of course Jesus Christ is real, for no one could have invented Him ; His character is utterly beyond the conception of Jewish peasants : it would take a Jesus to invent a Jesus. Hebrew writers, notwithstanding their fierce fanaticism against image-making, did not shrink from describing Him as the Very Image of God, the outward sign and the Thing signified in one ; manhood was the outward sign and the Deity the inward reality.

At the beginning of this chapter reference was made to the contrast between the religions of the world and the faith of Israel in that the pagan systems looked to the past while Judaism looked to the future. But at once the question must arise : does not Christianity point to the past ? Are you not basing your religion on the events that took place many centuries ago ? Are not the thoughts of men directed to a birth in the past, to a life, death, and resurrection all in the past, that is, to a Personality who lived and died and rose again many centuries ago ?

Christianity claims to be an historic faith, that is to say, a faith which does not merely deal with mental conceptions and ideal verities, but presents those virtues enshrined and preserved in historic occurrences. But do not historic events recede further in the past as the years roll by ? Will not their power over new generations proportionately decrease with the increasing distance from the present ?

It is a very long time now, nearly two thousand years ago, since the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ took place. It may be God's will that a vast interval of time may intervene before the "Last Day." Can this Sacrament possibly retain its power over men through periods of time indefinitely prolonged? Can it be that events in a remote corner of this little planet have a significance so stupendous? Such questions are valid and well-grounded, and on the answer to them depends our reasonable hope. In the following chapters the answer will be given in some detail, but here it may be summed up by saying that the doctrine of the Holy Spirit implies that the Sacrament of the Incarnation is ever in the present; Godhead and Mankind are ever joined together; He was, He is, He is to come. The gift of the Spirit is the gift of a living Presence bringing the Sacrament of God into our midst and into ourselves. The first question St. Paul put to people whom he found to be believers in God was this, "Did ye receive the Holy Spirit when ye believed?" Why did it matter so much? It mattered so much because the Incarnation is not only of the past but it is in the present. Jesus Christ thus described the work of His Spirit: "He shall take of Mine and shall show it unto you"; that is to say, He will not only recall historic occurrences on the further side of a wide abyss of time, but He will show you God now in Christ and Christ now in man. The main law or principle of the Spirit's action is this; He lifts the natural into the spiritual, the secular into the religious, and the earthly into the heavenly; He descends in order that He may lift. Apparently this has been the process in the physical universe. There has not only been an unfolding of what was within, but an adding of something from without, and through this addition comes transformation.

In the dim days of the past there has been a series of descents. Something descended into the dull earth, and the soil was lifted up, it may be into the fragrant lily or the rose. Something descended into the vegetable world and it was lifted up into the animal, moving with agility

and grace. Something descended into the animal and it was lifted up to be the man, the animal that reasons and loves and prays. No one can tell how the mineral has been transformed into the vegetable, or how the vegetable passed into the animal, or the animal into the reasoning, loving, praying man.

The Spirit of God descended to lift man into God. He descended upon the Maid of Nazareth, and therefore it is written "That Holy Thing which shall be born of Thee shall be called the Son of God." The Spirit took of the substance of a woman, our Mother and our Sister, and lifted it into God. "The bush burned with fire and the bush was not consumed."

In an upper room at Jerusalem there was a group of the lovers of Jesus, men whose broken hearts had been mended by the Resurrection, whose trembling panic had been changed into fearlessness. They were not men of outstanding genius; some had grave defects of character. As yet they were not allowed to bear witness to Him whom they loved and in whom they believed, because not yet had the Spirit lifted them into the Incarnate life of God. But the great promise stood for them as it stands for all time; "Because I live, ye shall live also." Then came Pentecost; the Holy Spirit descended, and the simple, ordinary, average people, men and women, fishermen, tradesmen and officials, were lifted up. They were lifted up to be the Body of Christ, that is, the Body in which His Presence is assured and the instrument through which His beneficence still works;* "Now are ye the Body of Christ and members in particular." Everywhere now His Presence is Sacramental, hidden and yet revealed, because the Spirit is ever lifting the natural into the spiritual.

Those who carry the Good News to men who have not heard it know with what a shock of surprise the message is received that the Christ of Whom they read in the Gospels is not merely one who was present a long time ago on earth, and who may possibly visit it again, but One Who is always

* See Chapter X.

present. Educated Indians, for instance, suppose that Christianity consists wholly in the acceptance of Christ's moral teaching. They compare it with the teaching of Krishna in the Bhagavadgita ; sometimes they prefer it, sometimes they do not. It is amazing to them to hear that Christianity is union with a living Person actually present, and that the Christian is one, who not only accepts Christ's teaching when He was visible in Palestine, but lives a life of devotion to and dependence on the Christ Who is here.

This life of devotion to the present Christ is described by St. Paul as walking by faith and not by sight. To walk by sight is to live in a world of sense-perception, of which we are aware through our physical senses and of which without those senses we should be entirely ignorant. An animal walks by sight, that is, by sense perception. The keener our sense perception is the more we know about the material world. Possibly the lower animals are aware of much that entirely escapes us, whilst on the other hand with our physical senses reinforced by a more or less powerful intellect we are able to get an experience of physical things immeasurably beyond what they can have. Our eyes are rendered vastly more effective by microscope and telescope and our other senses by cunningly devised instruments. But as long as we walk by sight alone we are living as animals only, and no more than animals.

We may be immensely powerful animals, super-animals, but we are only animals still. But when St. Paul says that we—and by "we" he means the members of Christ—walk by faith he is declaring that there is another order in which either this physical order is enclosed or into which it may be lifted, and that order is the spiritual order. To the spiritual order we have access, not by the same kind of senses by which we have access to the physical order, but by a spiritual organ of perception which he calls faith. Walk by sight, that is, live in the physical order only, and we are living as animals, however "super" we may be. Walk by faith, that is, live as a member of the spiritual world, drawing upon the forces of spirit and not only of

flesh, or in the Spirit, lifting up the forces of the flesh so that they become spiritual, and then and then only are we truly living as men. We are animals still, but animals lifted up into the life of spirit.

The task of religion is to co-ordinate these two worlds, the physical world in which we walk by sight and the spiritual world in which we walk by faith, and to the Christian the spiritual world means the Real Presence of God and of God as sacramentally known in Jesus Christ. We look not to the past alone, but to the present; we experience the Presence of God in the New Way.

CHAPTER V

THE PRESENCE IN THE NEW WAY

IMMANENCE is a matter of human discovery. Transcendence is a matter of Divine revelation. Nothing but blind unintelligence can fail to discover the presence of force working in the universe, but no intelligence however acute can of itself prove that force or what is behind that force to be loving and wise. Man by himself seeks not salvation but release, and he seeks it in himself. When he is aware of revelation he seeks not release but salvation, and he seeks it in God. In one of the *Upanishads* we find the prayer, "O Thou Self-revealing One, reveal Thyself in me." To the Israelite the answer came, "I am the Almighty God: walk before Me, and be thou perfect." That revelation comes now to us in the gift of Jesus Christ who is not merely one of God's words but the Word of God, the great Sacrament of His Real Presence.

In the Epistle to Titus St. Paul says that "The Grace of God has made its epiphany," and he must mean that by the Incarnation God's presence is amongst men in a new way. God's presence is now in human nature in the person of Jesus Christ. This presence is called the Grace of God because it is not the fruit of our own intellectual discovery, nor is it given in response to any deserving of our own, but it is given simply out of the love of God. The Greek word indeed signifies that what God gave was exceedingly fair and beautiful; the Latin word from which our English word comes means exactly the same, but there has been added to it the thought that the fair and beautiful gift was given "without money and without price." This gift is the Presence of God in the New Way. Theologians speak sometimes of created grace and uncreated grace.

In Newman's famous hymn of the Incarnation in the *Dream of Gerontius* is found the verse

> "And that a higher gift than grace
> Should flesh and blood refine,
> God's Presence and His Very Self
> And essence all divine."

Here what is described as "God's Presence and His Very Self and essence all divine" must be that uncreated grace, which St. Paul teaches us has made its epiphany by the Incarnation.

It is remarkable that only two writers in the New Testament use this word "epiphany" and they were close and deep friends.

St. Paul only has it in the letters which he wrote at the very end of his life during his second imprisonment, and it was St. Luke who was with him at the very end. "Only Luke is with me." It does not require a great stretch of imagination to suppose that when the two friends were talking together in that gloomy cell in Rome, St. Paul being chained with a coupling-chain to his guard, maybe he caught this word from his friend's conversation, and welcomed it, and used it. It spoke of brightness and light and gladness.

It was true that he was an ambassador in chains, and his cell was dark and gloomy. But what of that? The two friends talked together of that Dayspring from on high which had epiphanied or shined upon them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death.

In the letters which St. Paul wrote from the shadow of that condemned cell he speaks eight times of the brightness of the epiphany.

It is not, of course, that the thought was a new one in his teaching. He had written to the Christians at Corinth that God commanded the "Light to shine out of darkness, who shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

The epiphany of the grace of God means the Real Presence

of Jesus Christ, or the Real Presence of God in a new way, the new and living way of Incarnation.

There are Christians who think of Him as absent. They think of Him as present long ago in a remote corner of the earth for the brief space of a young man's life and as absent ever since. They hold the faith that finally He will return to take us into His presence and thus be absent from us no longer. Or they describe Him as "spiritually present," but they give no richer content to the idea of "spiritual presence" than that of an effort of faith made by themselves to conceive of Him. If they succeed in making the effort He is present subjectively to them, but not otherwise. Or they regard the Holy Spirit as His substitute; He has gone indeed, but the Holy Spirit has come as a substitute to represent Him till He comes again. No one of these is the conception of either St. Paul or St. Luke. In *Acts* it is written "a cloud received Him *out of their sight*," and the words literally rendered mean "from their eyes." Physical sight could no longer apprehend His presence. No one of them is the promise of Christ Himself. "I will not leave you orphans, I will come to you." When the Son comes, then also the Father comes. "If any man love Me, he will keep My word, and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him and make Our abode with him." When St. John's eyes were opened he saw his Lord standing in the midst of the Church. "I saw seven golden candlesticks, and in the midst of the candlesticks one like unto a Son of Man." "These things saith He that walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks." He Who stands and walks in His Church is not absent.

When the Grace of God made His epiphany, He did not come as a temporary visitor, but He came to fashion for Himself a permanent and eternal home in man. It is of vital importance that this should be made clear in the presentation of the Good News to men, for it seems that often there is grave misconception as to what the doctrine of the Incarnation and the Holy Spirit implies. For instance, the well-known leader of the Brahma Samaj, to

whom reference is made in Chapter II, described the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation in this way: "Is it any news to the spiritually hungering soul to be told that God Almighty became incarnate in flesh and blood at a certain period in history and in a certain place? To hear it, or to believe in it, is it the same thing as to have Him as an indwelling, living, and loving reality?"

"Suppose the case of a man, who, by reading the description of the white bears of Russia, has got a longing for seeing one of them. Is it any news for that man to be told that a white bear was once brought into the Zoological Garden of Calcutta in the year 1887? Would that satisfy his curiosity? Would even the testimony of a dozen people who actually saw the white bear in the Zoological Garden satisfy his mind? He longs to see a white bear, whereas you only give him testimony that such a one was once seen.

"Similarly when a human soul is longing to find the Supreme Being as an indwelling Power and to be elevated and strengthened by that presence, you will tell him that He assumed human shape in Judæa or Brindaban. To that man such news is nothing."

No one, of course, could write like this unless there had been a failure to represent the doctrine of the Incarnation in something of the fullness of its meaning, for, as all well-instructed Christians know, the epiphany of the Grace of God means that not merely was God manifested as man for a limited term at a certain spot of the earth's surface, but that God is in man now and for ever. It is not merely that a few fortunate people many hundreds of years ago heard His voice and saw His form, but actually in very truth millions of human beings have become partakers of His human nature and now share His very life. It is not merely that men may look back with admiration on a noble life, but that they may be members of a new race of which He is the Head. It is not merely that He came down in human nature, but that He has lifted human nature into God. It is not merely that a

great example of human excellence has been held up before mankind, but that the Incarnation has been extended to men as one by one they are made members of Christ. It is not merely that He appeared for a short time and lived in the midst of men, but that His very presence, human and divine, is now with men and in men.

It has always been easy enough to conceive of a god visiting the earth for a short time. "The gods are come down to us in likeness of men," cried the people of Lycaonia. The Greek, the Latin and the Indian peoples have readily enough accepted this belief. Gods came and went. Their human appearance was only a temporary robe to be thrown off when done with. The highest form which this doctrine of incarnation takes which is not real incarnation, is that found in the Bhagavadgita: "Whenever there is decay of righteousness, and there is exaltation of unrighteousness, then I Myself come forth. For the protection of the good, for the destruction of evildoers, for the sake of firmly establishing righteousness, I am born from age to age." It is a noble conception, but it is not the conception which has come to us as the Christian revelation of God, in which it is revealed that God has entered human nature to abide in it for ever, and thus to give us forever His Presence in the New Way.

This Real Presence of Jesus Christ has three modes. First, He Himself has attached it to believers, "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them." Where two or three believers come in His name to a country or town or to a village, then truly Christ is present there. God's Presence in the New Way has been given to that place. The truth may be illustrated in a most literal and concrete fashion. For instance, on August 15th, 1549, St. Francis Xavier landed in Japan. The whole party consisted of nine persons, of whom five at least were Christians who had assembled together in Japan in the Name of Jesus Christ. Never before had Christian men assembled in Christ's name in Japan. With the exception of some Portuguese sailors who had been driven

ashore in a storm seven years earlier no Europeans had ever stood on Japanese soil. Now a band of Christian men stood there, and we are therefore justified in saying in accordance with the promise of Christ that the Presence of God was there in the New Way for the first time. It would have been as true to say to the crowd who gathered round them, as it was true for St. John the Baptist to say to the people; "There standeth in the midst of you One Whom you know not." The same phrase is used for "in the midst of you" as is used in our Lord's promise of His presence to the two or three assembled in His name.

It is not being asserted that men to whom the Incarnation has not yet been extended, who as yet have never heard the Holy Name of Jesus, have not had the Presence of that Word by Whom all things were made, Who upholds and carries to perfection all things by the utterance of His power, Who lighteneth every man coming into the world. From the early centuries of the Church great teachers have maintained that those who knew not the Incarnation, who had not rejoiced in the Presence of God in this "new and living way," have yet had the capacity and opportunity of salvation by the Presence of the Word. Justin Martyr, for example, declares that those who before the coming of Christ lived in accordance with the principles of righteousness, who lived, to use his own expression, "with the Word," were really Christians even though they were described as godless. "Those who did the things which are universally and naturally and eternally good are well-pleasing to God, and will be saved through this same Christ in the resurrection no less than the just men who lived before them, Noah and Enoch and Jacob and the rest, with those who have recognized this Christ to be the Son of God." He taught that the philosophers and poets of the non-Christian world in their measure were inspired by the Word. Clement of Alexandria teaches the same: "All are saved who desire faith." He finds the presence of the Divine Word in all good men and true. "The heavenly and truly divine love in this way comes to men, wherever

the truly noble, being kindled in the man's soul by the Divine Word, is enabled to shine forth."

It is not therefore being asserted that the Divine Word was absent from men to whom the Incarnation had not yet come, but that now by the coming of men in His Name they had the Presence of the Divine Word in a new way; they had the Presence of the Incarnate Word, the Real Presence of Jesus Christ, for that Presence is now attached to human nature, to the believers in His Name. It is Jesus Christ present in His Church, present as man and present as God, present as He presides over and leads our worship.

In this first mode of the Presence there is nothing which touches the senses, there is no support to faith except His own words, " I am in the midst." But in the second mode the Holy Spirit takes natural things and lifts them into the spiritual. This thought was touched upon in Chapter IV. The Holy Spirit takes of the fruits of the earth and lifts them into the Kingdom of Heaven. He takes the Bread and the Wine and lifts them into that through which Christ gives Himself to be touched, handled, embraced, and received. " He shall take of Mine and shall show it unto you."

If we compare the modes of His Presence before His Ascension with the modes of His Presence after, it may be said that the first mode when He is " in the midst of us " corresponds with that historic Presence when men stood round Him and pressed on Him to hear the Word of God. The second mode corresponds with the Presence when He offered Himself to men's touch, or when He Himself laid hands on them. Men's faith did not bring His Presence. The Presence was offered to their faith to recognize and enjoy. It is now, of course, even more than touch that He offers to our faith; it is not only " Handle Me and see," for in the Blessed Sacrament He pours His own life into us

To St. Mary Magdalene He was present in the garden of the sacred tomb, and the apprehension of the Presence turned the tragedy of overwhelming grief into unutterable

joy. All that she could say was "Master," while at the same moment she apparently stretched out her hands to touch Him. But to our surprise there went forth the prohibition "Touch Me not." But with the prohibition our Lord gives the reason for the prohibition, and the reason at first seems a paradox; "for I am not yet ascended unto My Father." That at first sight seems to be the very reason why she should touch Him without delay. If He were going away her love would yearn to take a last farewell, and her devotion would impel her to embrace His feet before the opportunity of the touch of that loving Presence should be gone. If we were saying good-bye to someone who was going a long voyage and he were to say, "Do not shake hands, for I am going away," we should reply, "But that is the very reason why we want a farewell grip of the hand." But our Lord evidently implied that there was a hindrance to her touching Him then, but that the Ascension was going to remove that hindrance. The hour was coming in which she and all other faithful people were to have the power of touching Him, and of much more than merely touching Him, as they willed. It would be true for them to say through this second mode of the Real Presence, "Our hands handled concerning the Word of Life."

Then there is a third mode of His Presence in the New Way. When St. John uttered the great words, "The Word became flesh and tabernacled," where did He say that He tabernacled? He said, "in us." The two Greek words are the simplest possible words to represent "in us." No doubt these two words, according to Greek usage, might be translated either "amongst us" or "in us," but not according to St. John's use. A little later in the same chapter when he wishes to express "among" he uses other words; "In the midst of you standeth one whom you know not." "In the midst of you," or "among you," is the same phrase as is used by our Lord when He promised His Presence to the association of two or three believers in His Name. When St. John said "in us" we cannot be mistaken if we include in his meaning not less than the

simple literal sense of the words, as when he reports our Lord as saying, " I in them and Thou in Me."

Thus the third mode is the mystic Presence of Jesus Christ, the Presence of God in the New Way, in the inmost recesses of our being. He Himself taught us to regard ourselves as the temple or tabernacle of the Divine Presence. More will be said of this in Chapter VIII, when we deal with the mystical life in its effect on penitence.* He called the human body a temple. " But He spake of the temple of His Body." In this temple of ours, body and spirit, He has made His dwelling. His Supreme, Majestic Personality deigns to enter into closest intercourse with ours. All the outward historic events of the Birth and Passion have their mystic but true counterparts in the secret transactions in this sanctuary of the spirit. The teaching of St. Paul and St. John is unintelligible until in some degree this is realized. To them a Christian is one who is in Christ and has Christ in him. They reproduce under varying phrases our Lord's teaching when He said, " I am the Vine, ye are the branches ; he that abideth in Me, and I in him." The Divine Transcendence is immanent in the human spirit in the New Way of the Incarnation.

These then are the three modes of the Presence in the New Way. It has been attached to the Church, to the two or three assembled in His Name. It has been attached to the Blessed Sacrament, in which He may be touched, embraced and received. It has been attached to new-created souls in which He makes His mystical indwelling.

* See also Chapter X.

CHAPTER VI

SOME EFFECTS OF THE PRESENCE

IMMANENCE and transcendence become enriched with fresh meaning by the revelation of the Presence of God in the New Way. A religion of immanence without the revelation of transcendence is very largely a religion of fear. It is not wholly so, for there are ecstasies produced by absorption into natural forces in which the possessed are, if not lifted above, yet driven beyond all the normal emotions. But for the most part natural religion as it is found in India and Africa is a religion of fear. Disaster and catastrophe are being constantly deprecated. The gods are besieged mostly that perils may be averted. No one can live in a non-Christian country without feeling the pathos of this ever-present fear. It is deliverance that men seek. But when the Christian messenger brings the good news of the epiphany of the Grace of God, that is of the Real Presence of God granted in the New Way by the Incarnation, he brings not primarily a message of deliverance but a message of salvation. It is indeed secondarily a message of deliverance from fear; "Fear not" is one of the most frequent exhortations in the Bible; but primarily it is declared that the Presence of God in the New Way is a saving Presence, that is, it brings wholeness or soundness, or salvation. It is the richest possible word to describe that which restores man to the condition of spirit, mind, and body which God meant him to have. It describes the restoration and fulfilment of God's plan.

When we want to know how we may expect the Grace of God in Christ to work, what kind of things He will do, we have to look at the types and examples given to us in the Gospels. They are not to be regarded as unique, but as

specimens; they are the beginning of His work. In the opening word of Acts we read of "all that Jesus began both to do and to teach." The work and teaching of the few years recorded in the Gospels were the beginning of the work and teaching of the Presence of God in the New Way; in Acts we have the account of specimens of the continuation of that activity. But the book of Acts in the New Testament is but a short chapter of the great book of the Acts of Jesus, which is being written day by day, which shall be complete at the Great Day. When we read the earliest message of the Apostles we find it to be, "Jesus is not dead but He is alive; He is not absent, He is present; it is His Name that saves; we have not made this man to walk, but He has: do not fasten your eyes on us, fasten your eyes by faith on Him." The book of Acts is not a record of the acts of the Apostles but of the acts of Jesus.

What is needed to-day is that the faith and fervour of the first days be recalled. If we have it not, it is because we are changed, not He; He is the same yesterday, to-day, for ever, and He is still "Jesus in the midst," the Presence of God given in the new and living way. The Gospels become new books to men when they recognize this. They are no longer only the records of great events of the past, lightning-flashes to reveal a Presence which is now withdrawn, but they show us what we may rightly expect to-day. He promised "He that believeth in Me, the works that I do shall he do also, and greater works than these shall he do." The "doing" comes first in St. Luke's account: "all that He began both to do and to teach." Jesus is in His Church, He is in His Sacraments, He is in the inmost chamber of the human spirit, and He is there both to do and to teach.

There is much about the body in the Gospels, though He Himself said little about it. He never put the restoration of the body in the forefront of His mission. Several times He said "I am come" to do this or that, "I am come that they might have life": "I am come to call not righteous but sinners to repentance"; "The Son of man is come to

seek and save that which is lost " : yet He never said, " I am come to heal the bodies of men." Nor is it recorded that on any occasion but one He sought out a man to make his body whole, and on that occasion the healing had a definite connexion with the remission of sins, for His final words were, " Sin no more lest a worse thing befall thee." When the paralysed man through the pertinacity of his friends had overcome insuperable obstacles and had passed into that Presence, which St. Luke describes on that occasion as the Presence of the power of the Lord to heal, Jesus Christ penetrated at once beyond the need of the body to the real need of the man, and the body was only healed to confirm the truth of the far more difficult healing of the spirit. His healing of the body is always in answer to prayer, for prayer is the manifestation of faith. Yet He included healing of the body in the commission which He gave to the Apostles and to the Seventy ; " heal the sick," He commanded them, and among the signs that should follow them that believed He promised that " they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover." For where there are those that believe, there is His Presence. It means that where there is the Presence of the Source of all wholeness in this New Way, and where there is union with Him, the energies of health necessarily go forth. It is one of the signs that inevitably follow : we might say " naturally " follow—the nature of the Presence being what it is. The sign is in response to faith, and it is confirmatory of faith. The expectation of this has never entirely died out of the Church. There have been periods when it has been especially vivid in the minds of the faithful and has had a larger place in their hopes : there have been periods when it has almost disappeared. Of late there has been an outburst of faith in Christ as the Healer of bodies, Who approaches the body through the spirit, and by bringing the spirit into closer union with Himself restores the body.

As this Presence in the New Way is manifested under three modes, so does the healing power work under the same three modes. There is the healing Presence in the

Church, in the two or three associated in His Name. But as the body has more than one member, so the gifts that are mediated by the Presence of Christ are distributed, this gift to one member and that to another. There is, says St. Paul, a special gift of healing (1 Corinthians xii. 30) which all have not received. There are conspicuous instances of men who have this gift. But in speaking of the distribution of spiritual gifts it is well to remember that Christ's Presence works both *through* His members and *in* His members. When the Grace of God works *through* the members personal sanctity does not necessarily accompany the gift. When the Grace of God works *in* the members, the effect is holiness of character. The ideal is being attained when the Grace works both *through* and *in*. In 1 Corinthians xii. we have a description of the Presence working *through* the members; in 1 Corinthians xiii. of the working that is *within*. St. Paul allows that Christians may earnestly desire to be gifted, but he points to a super-excellent way and that is the way of spiritual goodness when love is working within. When love is working within, then Christ is being formed within.

Suppose we could imagine ourselves being allowed to choose for any particular work, say, mission work in a foreign land such as India, between a man gifted with the power of healing and one in whom the Christ was being formed in love, St. Paul would unquestionably say, "Do not hesitate as to which of the two you will choose; choose him of the super-excellent way." It is better, no doubt, to out-love people than to out-miracle them; that is to say, it is better to draw them to Christ by love than by wonder. The power of Christian medical missions will always lie not only in the fact that they are the channels of Christ's healing power, that they are material means consecrated by the spiritual, but also in the fact that the impulse which founds them, directs them and maintains them is love. They are sacramental agencies consecrating scientific knowledge for spiritual ends, and sacraments must always ideally be administered by love.

Secondly, the healing Presence is in the Sacrament of His Body and His Blood. His Body strengthens and preserves our body; His Blood restores and refreshes our enfeebled life. We want more faith in its efficacy. Here we have the very touch of Christ by which power goes forth, that bodily contact through which He so often healed. Contact in response to faith was frequently the method by which He restored bodily well-being. Faith was indeed indispensable, contact was not. He healed from a distance when He willed, but more frequently He healed through contact or through the use of some material means. We hear much of "faith-healing," but strictly speaking there can be no such thing. All that faith does is to render us capable of receiving health. It is Christ-healing; faith is the appropriating faculty. Our Lord indeed lays the greatest stress on faith, and the reason for this emphasis is clear. It was on man's side that there might be failure, not on God's. There was no doubt of His healing power, nor of His will to use it; the only doubt was whether men would have faith to accept it. Christ does not say, "My power hath healed thee," for there was no doubt of that. He calls attention to what man must contribute or His loving power will be in vain. "He could there do no mighty work because of their unbelief." When we bring our faith to Him in the sacraments He heals. He perceives that power has gone forth from Him, for someone has touched Him, and touched Him with faith.

Thirdly, there is the mode of the mystic Presence of Christ in the human spirit. No day should pass without the human spirit withdrawing steadily and of set purpose into the embrace of that interior Presence. This withdrawal should be practised by every Christian if only for a few minutes every day;

> "Close the door from sight and sound
> Of the busy world around."

We must withdraw, concentrate, and realize that dwelling within our own spirit we have the Source of all the

health and holiness of the universe, the Presence of God mediated to us in human nature. We have within us the Mystery of Godliness which is Christ in God. This is an age of hysteria and nervousness, of a multitude of imaginary complaints, of self-induced weakness and dissipated energy. Here is one great remedy. To concentrate the mind not on self and its infirmities whether bodily or moral, but to withdraw into the sanctuary of the spirit and there to meet and contemplate Christ.

One caution must be added. Christ is indeed the Saviour, the Wholeness-Giver, but the highest vocation He can give to some of His members is that of being conformed unto His Passion. Of Him it was said, "He saved others, Himself He cannot save." Again and again in India it is urged as a disproof of His Sonship that He did not save Himself. "Our Krishna," so wrote a Hindu student, "is greater than your Christ: for he killed his enemies whilst Christ was killed by His." It is not true to say of all sick people that if only they had faith they must necessarily be healed. Many of Christ's members are called in this way to be on the Cross with Him. They are summoned, "Friend, come up higher," that they may help to save others, and not themselves be saved from pain. They are invited to unite their pain to His. He does not need man's pain, but He wills to unite it with His own and use it. This is perhaps the key to the mystery hidden in the words of Colossians i. 24. No pain which is united to His but has some part in the redemption of the world.*

St. Luke, in the book of Acts, refers to his former record of Christ's activity as only the record of its beginning. He began both to do and to teach. When St. Paul declares that the Grace of God has made His epiphany, that is to say, that God has given His Presence in a New Way, He reminds us at once that the Presence is a teaching Presence. He uses the present tense which denotes that the teaching is not finished and complete but is a continuous process. Jesus Christ began to teach in the three years in Palestine,

* See Chapter X.

and He is teaching now. It follows that the Presence recognized, welcomed and loved implies continuous discipleship, a process of learning which never ceases. Christ's disciples never finish their education, for He never ceases to teach those who will to be taught. Each day is a new beginning to be a disciple for those who live in the Presence. A few years ago there died at the age of eighty-six in Bombay the first convert to Christianity from Zoroastrianism. When he was baptized in 1837 so furious was the storm in Bombay that a British regiment had to be called out. But he lived to see all the hatred and enmity die down, and when he died one of the Judges of the High Court, himself a Parsee, that is to say, of the religion and society which the convert had repudiated for the sake of Christ, described him as "this saint of saints." He said that he could never leave his presence, even when the conversation between them had had nothing specially to do with spiritual matters, without feeling impelled to return home and pray. When he was a very old man of eighty-five, expecting almost daily that his call would come to go hence and be no more seen, he was prevailed upon to write down the story of his conversion. At the end of his simple narrative he wrote, "To my fellow-converts let me say with all humility that in professing the Name of Christ a heavy responsibility rests upon us. *Such a profession means that we daily sit at the Feet of Jesus to learn of Him.*" It is like an echo of the words of another old man who on his way to martyrdom declared, "Now I begin to be a disciple." To live in the Presence is each day to begin again to be a disciple.

But when St. Paul speaks of the Grace of God teaching us he does not use the word which is used of our Lord's teaching in the Gospels. Some sixty times we are told of our Lord's teaching but not once is this word used. Nor does St. Paul himself use the word in this sense until he wrote the last letters of his second imprisonment. It is the word that is often used of chastening: "Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth." In the message from the glorified

Christ in the Revelation it is used in the case of the lukewarm people of Laodicea who thought that their education was finished and that they had need of nothing. "As many as I love I reprove and instruct," or "chasten." Possibly St. Paul came to prefer this word for Christ's education of His people because He had found that one of Christ's chief ways of teaching is through the events of life; joys and sorrows, successes and failures, gains and losses are used in the education of the disciple living in the Presence. It is in retrospect that men come to realize this; often at the time the instruction is not perceived. When the illness came it was looked upon as a troublesome interruption to plans and endeavours, but afterwards it became transparently clear that He was instructing. A time of great joy was revelled in, but afterwards it was recognized that it was His way of bracing the spirit to endure. St. Paul himself could draw on the experience of his own education in the virtue of humility; "That I should not be exalted overmuch, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh." Christ instructs through life and His Presence may perhaps be more readily apprehended by some in times of infirmity and joyous exaltation than in the hours of worship and intercession. But this means that we must keep our minds alert, on the look-out for His instructions. This mental alertness is specially necessary for all those who are trying to live in the recollected Presence because it is not only in the abnormal paths of life that He makes Himself known and teaches. Two friends are earnestly talking together and Jesus Christ is found to be with them. Others are engaged in the toil of a fisherman's life and Jesus Christ is hard by waiting to give them messages of life and peace.

There is another truth hidden in the word, which really means dealing with people as children, for it has got the word "Child" in it. When Jesus Christ said, "Verily I say unto you, except ye turn and become as little children ye shall in no wise enter into the Kingdom of Heaven." He used the word for "children" which is found in this

word for " teach." If the Presence of Christ is daily to be to us a teaching Presence we have to be as children, with the child-mind attitude towards Him. This child-mind attitude is shown in the directness and simplicity of a child's faith which is always exercised towards persons. A child might possibly be induced to believe in the universal presence of diffused force and therefore be conscious of the Divine Immanence in some vague way, as races in their childhood have always been. But the child-mind puts faith solely in personality, that is, in force characterized by transcendence, or rather in a personal entity above the force and using it for his own purpose. Nor is a child's faith blind faith. A child trusts those whom God has given him to trust. Hinduism takes us back to the childhood of the human race and to those primary religious instincts which generally witness to the essential spiritual needs of man. We are therefore not surprised to find that Hinduism lays such stress on the need of a teacher and of the importance of placing absolute reliance on him. Such personal responsibility as he has is shown in his choice of a Guru, but once the Guru has been chosen his teaching must be implicitly followed. Ideally each Hindu has to become a child to his teacher.

But just as in the case of the child God has prepared the satisfaction of his need, so we believe in the case of the religious instincts of mankind craving for a Guru He has also provided the satisfaction. It is proved by experience that man can never find complete satisfaction in the record of teaching given long ago. He must have a present teacher and present teaching. Even in Islam, where recorded written teaching is revered as the one final authoritative instruction for mankind, to last for all time unchanged and unchangeable, there are frequent revolts springing from the need of the living and present Guru. Sufiism, for instance, is not only a revolt against the doctrine of the absent transcendental God, that is to say, against the exaggeration and the distortion of the doctrine of Divine transcendency, but is also a revolt against the

doctrine that God having once spoken speaks no more. The Mohammedan Sufi is out both to find the real Presence of God and to listen to His teaching.

With the first awakening of conscious life the child finds a personality ready and waiting to be the object of his faith. He finds looking down into his eyes other eyes which shine with mother-love. He finds at once the means by which his faith is exercised. Each of us also has to be led and taught, and no past record of teaching given to others can by itself possibly satisfy us. We need a present Guru ; by the Incarnation the need has been supplied, and God has planted in us something by which we are able to recognize and trust Him ; " that not of ourselves, it is the gift of God." To live a recollected life means that we are always trying to get back to the simplicity and directness of the faith of a little child in a present Guru.

A further mark of the child is his innocence ; his spiritual consciousness has not been darkened by wilful sins. When our Lord tells us to turn and become like children He must mean for one thing that we must have the clean heart of a child which brings the right spirit of a child. It is the old truth that spiritual enlightenment and clean hearts are in necessary alliance. " Into a malicious heart wisdom shall not enter, nor dwell in the body that is subject unto sin." It follows that Christ can only teach the innocent and the penitent. He Himself put it in this way, " If any man willeth to do His will, He shall know of the teaching." We cannot have the innocence of ignorance of sin which a little child has, but we can have the innocence which comes from continual penitence and from the continual will to do the will of God. He who lives thus is one who is being daily cleansed by the Blood of Jesus. The Blood is the sacrificed life, and those who believe in the Real Presence believe that the sacrificed life is continually at their disposal in the Personality of Jesus Christ. They can make the words of the psalmist their own, " I have not shrunk from Thy judgments, O Lord, for Thou teachest me."

We have then the Real Presence of Jesus Christ teaching

us, and we may say that the purpose of His teaching is to make us see as He sees, know as He knows, and think His thoughts. Tissot painted a picture in which he tried to depict what Christ saw from the Cross. To do this he had to imagine himself by Christ's side or looking through Christ's eyes. If " I am crucified with Christ " I am to look from the same standpoint as Christ. I am to look out upon the Father, upon the world, upon men, upon sin, upon hell and heaven as He does. No one can enter into the full power of the Christian religion unless he has faith *in* Jesus Christ, but the faith *in* Jesus Christ necessarily includes the faith *of* Jesus Christ. In *Hebrews* He is described as " the Leader of faith." He is to lead us to share His own faith as the Son Who has taken human nature, Who is as truly man as though He were not God, and this means that He teaches us so as to give us His own standpoint, His own outlook, and His own knowledge. This conception is full of awe for us, but we must not shrink from so sublime a truth. St. Paul did not hesitate to say that it was actually so, Christ's mind was to be ours, " Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus." He even ventures to say, " For who hath known the mind of the Lord that he should instruct Him ? But we have the mind of Christ."

The surrender of ourselves to the teaching Presence of Christ is the fruit of self-denial. It is a misfortune that this term has been so weakened, and indeed emptied of its real meaning, that it is mainly used of the giving up of things we naturally like for the sake of others or for the sake of self-discipline. People are urged to practise self-denial in Lent and other fast days. A hard life from which ordinary pleasures and consolations are absent or are deliberately renounced is described as a life of self-denial. But when Christ called upon men to deny themselves and follow Him He called them to something immensely deeper and greater than self-discipline, though it must include it. To deny the self is to let another Self be supreme. It is to enter into a union of personalities which is the closest conceivable. It is remarkable how the Hindu doctrine and

practice of Yoga come very near in expression to the doctrine of Christian self-denial and yet are infinitely distant in fact. The end of both is union with God. The Hindu doctrine is vitiated by the teaching that personal existence is an illusion, that the spirit of man and the One God are identical. Men are to seek for union with God and they are to seek it by self-denial, but the self-denial is the realization that none but God exists. *Yoga*, which means union, is practised in order to dissolve the ties by which a man is bound to an illusory world and to an illusory self, which only seem to be and are not. The artificial means of effecting the dissolution of illusion have developed into a formal system with its own proper text-book of instructions. All this is the outcome of a mistaken and fantastic* theory of life, but as the desire for union with God bears witness to an inherent capacity of human nature, so also the artificial system of Hindu *Yoga*, which seeks to effect union, bears witness to the truth that there must be a way and a method of life which lead to God.

Christ teaches us how to find this union not by treating personality as an illusion but by bringing the human personality into its true relation to the Divine. Human personality can only be realized in relationship ; it cannot be solitary, and the supreme relationship in which human personality attains to its fullness is the relationship to God. The language which Christ uses to point out the way of union emphasizes its indispensable condition. The human personality must not be set up in independence : it can only find itself by surrendering itself into the power of another, and that Other the Supreme Personality. " If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself." He is not to deny that he exists ; for he is to spend his life in following Christ, but he is to deny the self as independent personality following its own way and seeking its own will.

* If, as is inevitable, an intelligent enquirer asks how this illusion came to pass the only possible answer is that the One became voluntarily ignorant in order to undergo a certain experience : " To taste of reality and illusion, the great Self becomes twofold." (*Maitrayana Upanishad*, 7.11.)

He who denies the self is not thereby merged in the infinite, but from this self-denial comes the surrender of independence, the yielding of the will to Christ's will, with the consequent life of obedience and fruitfulness.

To have the mind of Christ means self-denial or self-surrender, and without it Christ's Presence cannot teach. A mistake which many Christians make is to struggle to attain self-control. What they should aim at is surrender to Christ-control, and the one secret of Christ-control is self-denial. "He that ruleth his spirit is better than he that taketh a city," said a wise man of old, but the Gospel points to a higher wisdom still, "I live; and yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me." Such is the result of responding to Christ's call, "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself." When the self-denial is complete he can say "I live"; his personality is not destroyed. But he lives indwelt and sustained by Another, and so he says, "Not I, but Christ liveth in Me." Ideally baptism effects the potency of this self-denial, for "buried with Christ by baptism into death" we pass into the new life in which we are "alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." This new life is a common life in which we surrender independence so as to be the channel of His thoughts as well as the instruments of His ministry. Thus to be enlightened was used as a synonym for to be baptized. With the second generation of Christians it became the ordinary term. Even in the New Testament it is probably used in that sense. When the author of *Hebrews* speaks of "those who were once enlightened" he probably means "those who have been baptized." Christ is the Light; he who denies himself is flooded with that light.

There are times when we hear Christian people bewailing their ignorance and dwelling upon the need of patience until the day dawn when difficulties shall be cleared away in the light of fuller knowledge. It is true that St. Paul speaks of our vision of truth as being like the sight of things reflected in a mirror, and possibly the mirrors he was familiar with were not very efficient, but he declares

emphatically that we know even though it be but "in part"; and it is he who triumphantly exclaims that the mystery which hath been kept in silence through times eternal is now manifested.

St. John does not hesitate to tell Christians that having the Anointing from the Holy One they "know all things," or as it may be that "they all know." "His Anointing," he says a little later, "teacheth you concerning all things." Our Lord Himself said, "No longer do I call you servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth; but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard from My Father I have made known unto you."

Finally, we may ask how the Real Presence of Christ in the New Way instructs us? If we are to see with His eye, know with His knowledge, and think His thoughts, what are we to say of His method? Again, we may connect His method with the threefold mode of His Presence.

First, there is the Presence in His Church, and most Christians readily acknowledge that through men they have heard His voice and learned of Him. There is no need to dwell on this, for there are few who cannot look back gratefully on the past and say; "Through such and such a one I learned truth, and I knew that it was Christ present who was teaching me through him."

But we go still deeper, for heart to heart speaketh. The heart of Christ speaks directly to us as well as through human teachers. The Sacrament of the Eucharist as well as the Sacrament of Baptism is the Sacrament of enlightenment. "See how mine eyes have been enlightened because I tasted." The Food of Heaven prepares the spiritual eye and quickens into sensitiveness the spiritual ear, and thus makes us ready to hear Christ's voice, and he who uses the Gospels to listen to that voice teaching him will know that He is not recalling words which were spoken in the past, but hearing a living Voice. "For living is the Word of God and active . . . and quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart."

CHAPTER VII

THE PRESENCE AND THE KINGDOM

WE are living in a period when the failure of the kingdoms of men has become vividly apparent. All through the whole range of human history there has been grievous failure, but in the last century there was much to blind our eyes and disguise the failure. Nor was it merely that the kingdoms of men in the West had failed; the failure was universal. Sir Rabindranath Tagore lecturing in Japan solemnly warned the Japanese against imitating the methods and aims of Western civilization, and pointed to the dread calamity it had brought upon the world. He spoke of the unspeakable filth which had accumulated for ages at the bottom of European civilization as being churned up and producing the horrors of the world war. But no kind of earthly civilization has ever saved mankind from the calamities of war. The Great War lasted for less than five years, but war in India went on without intermission for six hundred years, and the sufferings of the people were indescribably grievous. All the civilizations of the past have had something of the same kind of record.

No doubt there was much in the West to blind our eyes to the failure; the achievements of science, the conveniences of modern life, the improvement in sanitation with the great decrease in the death-rate, the abolition of certain kinds of barbarous cruelty, these things not only served to disguise the failure, but they led men to suppose that the progress of civilization would build up heaven on earth. To civilize was used as an equivalent of to enlighten and refine. Few people speak like this now. They know that

they must look elsewhere if they are to continue to have any hope for mankind.

Into a world which had failed our Lord came saying, " The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand : repent ye and believe the good news." The words seem neither to be a threat nor a warning. It was not the way of our Lord to threaten, though it was His way to warn.

To threaten is to declare the intention to inflict punishment or loss, and we never find our Lord doing this. To warn is to point out the inevitable consequences of certain kinds of action and character, and our Lord often did this. Love never threatens, but it necessarily warns ; indeed love would not be love if it did not warn. When men were in danger of sin against the Holy Spirit He warned them ; He declared the tremendous truth that " Whosoever shall blaspheme against the Holy Spirit hath never forgiveness. ' It is not that God is not ever ready and willing to forgive, but it is possible to destroy the spiritual organ of reception, so that men may render themselves incapable of receiving what the great loving heart of God is ever longing to bestow.

But when our Lord calls on men to change and gives as a great motive and stimulus of this change, the at-handness of the Kingdom of God, He does not seem even to be warning. He is rather holding out a great inducement, but it is an inducement of which men cannot appreciate either the meaning or value unless there is a complete change of mental and spiritual outlook. The change is so great that it may be described as a revolution ; it is an interior revolution, so profound that there is a new mind, a new standpoint, a new hope. Men cannot even see the Kingdom of God, much less enter it, unless they experience this complete interior change, and our Lord appeals for it because the Kingdom is so close. What is the use of beauty if there are no eyes to see it, or of music if there are no ears to hear it ? What is the good of food if men cannot recognize it as food nor digest it ? It is the tragedy of tragedies for the Kingdom of God to be here, should the eye and ear

of the human spirit neither see nor hear, should the Bread of Heaven be richly supplied and not even recognized as food.

It is said by some that the Kingdom of God was the supreme and dominating thought of Christ's mind, that He lived and died and rose again for it. Certainly it was one of His key thoughts, and the phrase was more frequently on His lips than any other except that of "The Son of Man." From Nazareth to Calvary He spoke of the Kingdom. He used it in many contexts and explained it by many comparisons, but He never defined it; He was content to suggest its meaning. From these comparisons we may infer it to be both visible and invisible; it has come and yet it is still to come. It is a hidden influence and yet it is an organized society. It is interior and exterior; it is within men and without them. Men seek it and find it; they live for it and they die for it, for its sake they suffer privation and even mutilation. Its inhabitants must be childlike, not childish, otherwise there is no admission for them. Some will be included who afterwards have to be cast out. It is very difficult for the "rich" to get in, and no one whatever will be able to get in without a new birth. It has secrets and mysteries which will not demand great intellectual capacity for apprehension; indeed they are revealed unto "babes." If we say the Kingdom of God is the Catholic Church, the Mystical Body of Christ, this will not fit all the suggestions; we cannot say that the Catholic Church is in us. Nor if we take one of St. Paul's utterances concerning the Kingdom, can we change it into "The Catholic Church is not meat and drink but righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." We can, however, say, "The Catholic Church offers you not meat and drink but righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost."

We want some thought which will unify and harmonize all the suggestions of parable and phrase. It has been proposed to translate it the Reign of God, but the change still leaves us without the master-thought which brings all

into unity. It is when we think of religion as life lived in the Presence of God that we find the thought. The Kingdom of God is the coming of the love and power of God into human life in a new way; it is God putting Himself at man's disposal in a fresh form. He does it that He may reign over us and that His will may be accepted. It is thus that His coming or His at-handness makes a Kingdom, for the union of King and people is a Kingdom; but the vital point is that the King gives Himself to His people in order that He may reign over them and in them. It is a new and living way by which God comes. We might paraphrase Christ's passionate appeal to men into, "Repent, for God is coming to you in a new and living way; He is coming through the veil, through all that now hides Him from you." This way was indeed the Flesh of Jesus, all that is meant by the Incarnation and all that the Incarnation entailed, the Cross and Passion, the mystic life of God in Christ within the soul; all that is summed up in the words;

> "Though Christ a thousand times in Bethlehem be born,
> If He is not born in thee, thy soul is still forlorn."

We saw in Chapter IV that the whole story of the universe seems to be comprised in a series of descents of life which springs from God. All through it is God putting some higher thing at the disposal of the lower, and so lifting the lower into the higher. The coming of the Kingdom is nearly always described by our Lord as something from above descending into that which is beneath. Seed is cast into the ground, leaven is put into the meal, the net is flung into the sea. The ground does not evolve the seed, nor the meal the leaven; the sea does not fashion the net. On the contrary, seed is put at the disposal of the ground which makes either a good or a bad use of the gift. The Kingdom of God, according to our Lord's teaching, is not socially evolved from within by the progress of civilization; it is sent down from above; a revelation not a discovery, a gift not an invention. The seed falls into the ground and dies, but no man can make seed. The seed is the Word of

God, and no man can invent the Word of God or discover the unsearchable riches of Christ.

When man is left to himself we see what he invents; when he sets out to discover God he imagines one like himself. It is argued sometimes that this is what Christianity has done and this is the secret of the fashioning of the doctrine of the Incarnation. Men wanted a God like themselves and so they fashioned Christ. The seed came not from above, but was evolved from the lower soil. Possibly this might have been convincing were it not that we know what kind of deity men invent for themselves. To take just one characteristic of humanly conceived deities, they are always demanding gifts and sacrifices, and without them they will not be favourable to men. The greater the gifts the more favourable the deity will be. The Rigveda is the most ancient religious writing of the world; Hindus look to it as containing their religion in its pristine purity. In the Rigveda the oblations which are to win the favour of the gods are milk and melted butter, grain and cakes and soma juice, goats, oxen, rams, cows, and horses; just the very things that men valued most as gifts or bribes for themselves were the offerings that would make the gods favourable. Human sacrifices appeased because there were fierce gods who could only be appeased in this way. But the Christian faith proclaims a God, *the* God, who puts Himself at men's disposal, who does not ask for gifts but asks to be allowed to give them, who most of all asks to give Himself. He does not need to be persuaded to be favourable, for He is favourable. God so loves that He gives. He does not demand a sacrifice from us, for He provides the sacrifice, and it is He Himself. This is the Evangel of the Kingdom of God; it tells of God Himself, Incarnate and Sacrificed, ever at our disposal. The natural thought or invention of man is entirely reversed. "Herein is love, not that we loved God but that He loved us and gave His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." Children do not have to bribe their mothers to love them; the love is always waiting for them. They may be naughty children,

but it awaits them still. The love of the child is always an answer ; it is the mother's love that is original, the child's responsive. Of ourselves we could never have discovered that God was like this ; so He comes to us and shows us. The initiative is from above and not from below. Those who bore witness, and those who by the Spirit bear witness still, tell us that they heard Him, saw Him and perceived by insight that He was really not less than God ; they even handled Him, and they maintain that what they experienced and apprehended was " That which was from the beginning," God the Eternal, whom philosophy calls the Absolute, which is little more than a term for covering our ignorance of God.

Nor is it only that the at-handness of the Kingdom means that God has come to men in a new way with a fresh unveiling of His character, asking to be allowed to sacrifice Himself for men, coming as a beggar and gently knocking and asking to be admitted, but it means also that men have the power to refuse Him entrance and to dismiss Him. He comes as a royal beggar and a Divine Suppliant, but He departs when men bid Him depart. When they prayed Him to depart out of their coasts He went. All this is what the at-handness of the Kingdom of God means to men, God at their disposal, God in their midst, God within them, God even to dismiss.

Those who thus present this thought of God to others who from childhood have been saturated with the ideas of the Divine which men have evolved from their own consciousness or from their experience of the external universe, watch the dawning wonder on the faces of those who hear. That God Himself should be the Sacrifice for men, that God should not have to be persuaded to be favourable because by His eternal nature and character He is favourable, that Priest and Victim should be one and the same, all this seems incredibly beautiful. There leaps into the hearts of the earnest who hear it the thought " But this is too good to be true ; it is very wonderful." A young Brahman reading the words of Christ for the first time

exclaimed to the writer " I did not know that there was anything so beautiful in all the world."

But how could anyone believe it unless he were changed ? As long as men believe that enlightened self-interest is the law of progress they cannot be aware of the at-handness of the Kingdom of God. The Great War indeed inflicted a grave intellectual shock on those who maintained that the hope of the world lay in well-calculated selfishness, but the masses of men still fail to recognize that it is this that has been blighting mankind all through the ages in every part of the world. Not by the diffusion of the spirit of enlightened self-interest will the City of God be built on earth but by God's way of redemption. It is no wonder that our Lord keeps saying, " He that hath ears to hear let him hear," that He congratulates those in whom the spiritual revolution is at work ; " Blessed are your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear." It is no wonder that one who handed on the good news of the Kingdom quoted the words of the prophet, " Eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, the things that God hath prepared for those that love Him " ; but He added, " God hath revealed them to us by His Spirit."

God, as we have seen in Chapter I, can only be immanent where His thought and will are : He cannot be immanent where enlightened self-interest holds sway. He is not immanent in the tongue that curses or in the hand of the malicious murderer, but He is immanent in the tongue that blesses and in the hand that ministers in love. He is immanent where love and beauty are and the Immanent is always the Transcendent. From this it follows that the Kingdom of God can only be where there is the necessary response ; God can only reign where men are willing to accept Him as King. In this most true sense the Presence of God is limited ; the Omnipresent may fail to find His rest. Man whose very existence is a proof of the Divine Presence, who lives and moves only because he is sustained in being by the will and thought of God, may yet limit and exclude that Presence because his thoughts are antagon-

istic to God's thought and his will is in rebellion against God's will. The Kingdom of God is God's Presence in Christ accepted and welcomed. It is one thing for God to be near us, it is quite another for us to be near God. To be near God is to be in His Kingdom and have His Kingdom in us.

This is why we have to work and pray for the extension of the Kingdom. The extension of the Kingdom depends on the admission of God as He approaches men's souls in the new and living way. "Draw nigh unto God, and He will draw nigh unto you." Real distance is not of space but of spirit. Two men may be walking together in a garden, yet God may be nearer to one man than his own thought and may be infinitely distant from the other.

CHAPTER VIII

THE MYSTICAL LIFE AND PENITENCE

TO say that to be near God is to be in His Kingdom and to have His Kingdom in us is to use the language of the mystic life. By mystic life is here meant the inner life of spiritual verity and experience as contrasted with or rather as the complement of the life of historical manifestation. Historical events take place in time and space and are apprehended in the ordinary way by the perception of the senses and then interpreted. Mystic life cannot be apprehended by any of the physical senses or even by the exercise of the intellectual faculties ; it is discerned solely by the spirit. At the same time it can be, and with Christians must be, outwardly signified by historic events. If the Kingdom of God be the coming of God into human life in the New Way, the way of Incarnation and Sacrifice, that coming was signified in space and time by definite occurrences. But to many people the Christian religion is concerned entirely with those stupendous events that took place many centuries ago, with a Birth, a Life, a Death, a Resurrection, that are solely in the past. They bring their minds to bear on those events and interpret their significance, or rather accept the authoritative interpretations of the spiritual society to which they belong. They use these doctrinal interpretations as the means by which both affections and will are so stimulated that they live the kind of life and practise the kind of conduct which they believe to be pleasing to God. They use certain prescribed forms of ritual to promote corporate spiritual fellowship and to maintain the commemoration of the great religious events. The events are long past, but they are kept fresh in the memory by the reading and study of the Gospels, by the

great Church Festivals and by commemorative acts. Religion thus practised has little or nothing to do with the mystic life.

As we saw in Chapter IV, historical events recede further into the past as the years roll on and their power over new generations may proportionately decrease with the ever increasing distance from the present. It is a very long time now, nearly two thousand years, since the Crucifixion and Resurrection took place. Suppose it were God's will that twenty thousand years more should pass before the Church were complete and the end of time should come, there would be Christians looking back over this vast interval of time to the great Act of Redemption. But it is remarkable that the Christian teachers who lived very near in time to the stupendous events which have revolutionized the spiritual story of the human race do not seem to think of their religion as mainly a contemplation of occurrences in the past. The religion which they teach is a religion of spiritual transactions and experiences in the present, and these transactions and experiences have to do with One Who is eternally the same ; not with One Who was formerly present and now is absent but One Who is really and actually present. For instance, the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, though he was not an apostle and apparently had not seen or heard Christ with his physical senses, was very near in time to the Crucifixion and Resurrection. He was so near that he could speak to those who had seen and handled Him Whom they believed to be the Word of Life. There were numbers of people still living who were in Jerusalem on the first Good Friday. To him the death of Christ was historically no far away tragedy as it is to us. It was an event of yesterday. But it is he who can free himself from the shackles of the duration of time and see in the external the sacrament of the real. The historic event is a symbol of an eternal verity, and that verity is in the present : it is *now*. This verity which is now, is ours to experience and partake of. Christ's life. death, and resurrection are as near to men now as they

were two thousand years ago, and they will be equally near twenty thousand years hence : not near in time and space relationships, but near in spiritual verity. They are the verities of the love of God and of the effect of our sin upon the love of God. Outwardly, we see them represented in Bethlehem, Calvary and the empty tomb ; actually, which is mystically, we partake of them and experience them now. It is in this present experience that we have the secret of the eternal newness of the Incarnation and all that it brought and brings with it.

The writer of the letter to the Hebrews has been mentioned above as one who saw in the external creed of Christendom the symbol of present experience. It so happens that with him this thought is applied mainly to the Crucifixion. For what is the Crucifixion in its inner mystic verity ? It is the love of God brought into contact with human sin. The love of God has not ceased nor has human sin come to an end. If this be so then the Crucifixion is, the Divine Pain persists ; Calvary in its inner reality continues. The historic event shows what this inner reality is which is continuing. The Gospel accounts of the Passion reveal and represent what is now going on ; they disclose the present agony of God over human sin. Nor is it only the agony of a Father sorrowing and distressed over a sinful child ; it is also the torture which is being inflicted by that sin on Him Who has put Himself within our power. For we must realize that by the Incarnation God delivered Himself over to men in a new way, and that this surrender of Himself still continues. He has put Himself in men's power and He remains in their power. The Ascension and Session of the Christ are the earnest of His victory over the human race, but that victory is not complete until He is " All in all." When we sing at Eastertide that " The strife is o'er, the battle done," we are celebrating the timeless verity of that which the outward event signifies : we are well aware that under time conditions the strife is going on, and under time conditions the victory is still future.

Thus it is that we have to think, if our religion is to be real, of God in Christ as putting Himself into our power now: He comes as a suppliant to dwell with and in the human spirit. "Behold I stand at the door and knock." We take Him into His home helpless and weak as a little child. By baptism He is born as a babe within, and there in the inner verity of the life of the spirit are enacted the stupendous events which history has made external. He is in men and men know Him not, as He was among men in Nazareth and Jerusalem and they knew Him not. We have already noticed the difference of the preposition used in the fourth Gospel in the two passages: "There standeth One among you whom ye know not"; "The Word was made flesh and tabernacled in us." The Incarnation brought His Presence externally among men, and mystically within the spirit of those who were willing to receive Him. Few people believe now in the impenetrability of human personality; individuals we may be, but personality touches personality and may indwell it. Probably personality can only reach its true perfection when it is indwelt. The conclusions of what is called the new psychology go to support the mystical teaching of the Church. It is conceded that it may be no longer the language of sentiment or poetry when we speak of "Christ in us, the hope of Glory," but the language of literal truth. The indwelling indeed has stages: it may begin with the touch of the spirit on spirit, which we generally call "influence," though the word in its origin implies much more than touch. The touch may go on to pressure; spirit presses upon spirit. From pressure it may advance to hold and from hold to possession, which is the fullness of indwelling. There are words in the New Testament corresponding to these five stages. These are the deep realities of religion; the Spirit of Christ touching, pressing, holding, possessing, indwelling. All real life is within, and every external manifestation, be it thought or emotion, or word or movement, is simply the outward expression of the inward. For the verity is there, Christ the Companion, Friend,

Saviour, King, God, in our power; such is the Love of God.

Often we must hurt Him unawares for never is He out of our power: often we hurt Him by wilful sin. He is sometimes neglected, sometimes scorned, and sometimes spat upon. It is all summed up by the writer to the Hebrews as he rehearses the completion of the tragedy, "They crucify to themselves the Son of God." We notice the "to themselves." The crucifixion externally manifested at "the place of a skull" is now in the mystic processes of the human spirit.

All this is to be entirely real in the penitential life. Day by day we live our true and veritable life within, and He is within. Day by day every movement of our spirit affects Him because of the indwelling. We have to use illustrations from external happenings just as the Passion of God is represented and made known to us in space and time, in events and things, Calvary and the Tomb, the thorns and the nails. It is as though He lives in a room externally with us and sometimes we carelessly knock up against Him and forget to apologize: He is our Guest, and sometimes we forget to give Him food and drink. Sometimes we insult Him when we really know; sometimes we have taken a scourge to Him. Sometimes it is as though we have only given Him a tenement in the house and do not admit Him into the inner shrine.

We can take Christ's words of invitation to us and invert them into prayers to Him. He says, "Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest." Just because He stands at the door and knocks we can use His own words and invite Him who in a world of strife and turmoil, of growing antagonisms and antipathies, labours and is heavy laden, to find a place of peace within the human spirit that was created to be His home. There seems a peculiar obligation on those who bear Christ's Name to provide Him within a sanctuary for His rest. Outside He is so often an outcaste, without peace among men not yet of goodwill: within it is ours to give Him

peace; within the spirit which He indwells there is to be no angry, hateful thought, nothing that can hurt Him Who has made the human spirit the place of His rest. "Come, for all things are now ready," we must reply to Him Who knocks.

That significant addition "to themselves" (Hebrews vi. 6) must mean, as we have seen above, that the crucifixion is concerned with the inner man; what takes place is in the secret verities of the human spirit. There is a throne and a cross in every heart; if Christ is not on the throne, He is almost certainly on the cross. But there is something more. They who "fall away," who are faithless to Him Whom they have once welcomed into His rightful home, put Christ to an open shame. Men do not indeed see the crucifixion, but they see Christ scorned, for most men have some true thoughts of the character of Christ. Even in lands such as India, where the vast majority of men either know nothing of or reject the sovereignty of Jesus Christ, there are millions with some true ideas of what kind of conduct that sovereignty demands. They who bear His Name are to commend Him to the world, to be the Epistles of His Gospel which all may read, to reveal the love of God in Him and to manifest the essential truth of the Divine Being, and yet again and again, by impatience and temper and selfish greed and worse, "they put Him to an open shame." The Greek word means that we show Him but we show Him all wrong, caricatured, perverted, changed. As though an artist were to paint the picture of a beautiful woman and depict what appeared to be a hideous hag; or as if we were to show Him in one of those mirrors which distort and disguise the true likeness. That is what Christians often do; they show Him, but they show Him all wrong, so that simple folk do not know what God is really like. We can imagine an innocent little child passing by Calvary on the first Good Friday hand in hand with his mother, and seeing that bloodstained, dying form hanging on the cross, saying to his mother, "See that bad man how horrid he looks, what

a wicked deed he must have done for men to punish him like that," and the mother answering as she hurriedly draws the child away, " Don't look at such a dreadful sight ; come away, don't look." Yet really He is fairer than the children of men, and that is what sin makes of Him ; He is put to an open shame. This is what is going on in the inner sanctuary of the spirit when Christ is displaced from the throne and put on the cross. The crucifixion may be " to themselves," but the shame is an open shame ; for they who crucify Christ within pervert and mutilate the likeness of God.

The same writer to the Hebrews uses language which exceeds in horror even that which speaks of men now crucifying Christ. They are told that they can tread under foot the Son of God ; they can treat His Blood as though it were " an unholy thing " to be flung away with the refuse or poured down a sink, and thus commit insolent outrage against the Spirit of Grace. Again, the writer is not looking back to the historic crucifixion nor is he describing what men had done thirty years or so before ; he is using the outward event to symbolize what can and does go on within the mystic sphere of the spirit of man in his dealings with God. All that is signified by " treading under foot " and treating the Blood as " an unholy thing " is enacted now both in the sacramental life and in the inner verity of the spirit. We can see that the emphasis lies in the fact that He is in our power now, for that power is given from above ; that is why we can trample Him under foot. The word for " trample " is His own word : He used it of the savourless salt only fit to be trodden under foot of men : He used it of the trampling of the swine upon the pearls of which they could not recognize the value. We can treat Him as if He were savourless salt : we can treat Him, the Pearl of great price, as one on Whom we senseless, sensual things can tread. He used the same term also of the seed, the good seed, trodden under foot of men, but men did it without knowing on what they trod. All this in the inner life and in the outer life of which the inner life

is the spring we can still perpetrate on the Son of God. It is not the ignorant trampling of pigs disappointed at getting what they cannot eat, or the unconscious trampling of the pedestrian as he hurries by, but the outrage of him who knows and understands. He may be temporarily blind with passion or sensual desire, but in his real self he sees.

The language is studied : in either case it is the Son of God Who is crucified, Who is trodden underfoot. The human spirit has the Divine Spirit in his power. Possibly the trifold personality of Perfect Being is in the writer's mind as he dwells upon the injury to God that Christians, above all others, have the power to inflict. All is against the Son of God. It may be that he has in mind the thought that as the honour of the Son is the honour of the Father, so to insult and injure the Son is to insult and injure the Father. He particularizes in his mention of the Blood ; it is the Blood with which we are consecrated to the royal priesthood ; " wherein he was sanctified," and " he " is the Christian. In the Levitical consecrations the blood touched ear and hand and foot ; the ear was to listen to God's voice, the hand was to work God's will, and the foot was to walk in God's ways. Men are taken up into the service, consecrated by His very Blood. But in the Christian consecration, the Blood which is the love and life of Christ poured out in unceasing sacrifice, this love and life now being poured out in active verity, has not merely touched us ; It, or rather He, for love and life are the essential sacrificed Christ Himself, has not merely touched us ; He has been received into the core of ourselves.

The writer adds that we do despite to the Spirit of Grace. He is either the Spirit Who has been given to us for nothing in response to no desert of our own, or it may be that he means the Spirit Whose grace we have actually experienced. There may be both thoughts combined ; we have partaken of riches to which we had no shadow of claim, the riches of the Spirit of Christ.

Thus he describes a Trinity of evil antagonizing the per-

fection of Personality, the Trinity of Love; for in the Incarnation, God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, has been put into our power.

"It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of a living God." We are in the hands of a living God, and He in ours. "Abide in Me, and I in you." We know something of what it has meant to Him to fall into ours, and what it still means. Isaiah lii. 13–liii, and the story of the Gospels are being fulfilled to-day. We know also something of what it means for us to be in His hands, when we abide in Him, and it is full of awe, a fearful thing indeed; our spirit led and possessed by His, drawn up the steep ascent of holiness by a strength that is not ours, carried by Him on the great adventure of the saints, we know a little and faintly of what this means. But to fall out of His hands, because we drive Him forth, that is far more fearsome. To be made for God and yet to lose God, what is this but hell? To be left to ourselves because we have expelled the inner Companion and Sovereign of the soul, what is this but the outer darkness?

It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God, and it is a blessed thing, for they are pierced hands, and even when they hurt they heal.

CHAPTER IX

THE PRESENCE AND PRAYER

THE Kingdom of God is the society of those who have both entered into and received the Presence of God in the New Way, the way of Incarnation and Sacrifice, and are therefore united to Him and to one another by this sovereign Presence. Prayer is the language of this Kingdom. The simplest description of prayer which can be taught to any child is that it is the remembering the presence of God and holding converse with Him. If God were only the expression of the desire that He should exist, though it would be possible to recall that desire, yet no man can hold converse with the expression of a desire. If there can be no realized or experienced sense of God's presence in the case of most men, attempts at prayer might resolve themselves into attempts to recall the intellectual arguments for the existence of God. If, however, we say that God is an inference, that as we have seen in Chapter I does not preclude experience, and therefore does not preclude prayer. If by certain signs I infer the presence of a person in a dark room I can certainly speak to him, and when I do speak to him personal contact is at once established and inference passes into experience. A woman blind, deaf and dumb from infancy has been brought through the sense of touch into vital personal relationships with large numbers of people, and has been admitted into the kingdoms of science and scholarship. Inference becomes experience of personality, because there is in the spirit of man the inborn capacity of apprehending personal presences. She who could neither see the bodies of these persons, nor hear their voices, became through inference directly conscious of their existence and presence.

There are those who apparently without the use of ordinary inference have become directly conscious of the presence of God. A lad of fifteen or sixteen, for instance, is sitting alone in a room. He is neither attempting to pray nor to perform any religious exercise. Suddenly he becomes conscious of a presence and he knows he is not alone. The presence fills him with exalted joy and peace and a sense of security that he has never experienced before. There are no outward signs of the presence : he sees nothing, he hears nothing, but he becomes absolutely sure of God and of God as love. Accidents of earthly life seem of little account to him and the fear of death once strong in his life seems to pass away. How long this state of exaltation and joy continued he could not say. All that he was sure of was that it was God, and none but God, who had been holding his spirit. Whatever inference there may have been was so rapid that it defied detection. Probably some such experience as this is what Bishop Temple refers to when he says that no one who has ever had such a moment of experience can afterwards quite ignore it. But it may be that millions of religious men can never recall any such moments in their lives and yet have no doubt of the Presence of God and of their capacity of entering into and of being filled with that presence through prayer. Directly we say that we infer the presence we imply that it is sacramental, and is sacramentally conveyed. To be convinced that the universe is God's thought and that everything in it which does not contradict love is God's thought, is to be convinced of the presence of God, for God's thought implies God's presence. Belief in the Incarnation is belief in the supreme and perfect Sacrament of God and therefore of God's perpetual presence in human nature. I may contemplate a flower, and realizing that it is in the mind of God and apart from His mind has no existence, I may know that in that flower I have a sacrament of the Presence of God.* But

* Close to the sod
There can be seen
A thought of God
In white and green.

when I want to realize the very substance of God, that is to say, to realize the presence of that without which God would not be God, I must contemplate God's thought in incarnation and sacrifice, and again that thought is sacramentally conveyed, that is to say, it is conveyed through Jesus Christ and His Presence in the New Way. If we analyse the meaning of the statement that if communion with God means the realized or experienced sense of God's presence, then with most men religion must be abandoned as out of reach, it seems to mean that most men live an external life, occupying themselves only with the outward part of the natural sacraments that are within their ken and do not penetrate within to make the great inference which will lead to the great experience. We say that it will lead to the great experience because there is within man himself the capacity to receive the touch of the Personality of God when once he knows where and how to look for it. Just as the girl, blind and deaf and dumb, was able to infer by the restricted indications left to her the presence of human personalities and enter into deep and precious friendships with them because of the capacity of her own personal being, all human beings by a true use of the sacraments of the thoughts of God may infer His Presence and enjoy the great companionship which is religion, again because of the capacity of their own personal being.

The first condition of prayer therefore is the practice of

Unmarred, unsoiled
It left the clay,
Serene, unspoiled
It views the day.

It is so holy
And yet so lowly.
Would you enjoy
Its grace and dower
And not destroy
The living flower ?
Then you must, please,
Fall on your knees.

The Snowdrop,
Anna Brunston de Bary.

the Presence of God ; the first condition of Christian prayer is the practice of the Presence of God in the New Way, the way of incarnation and sacrifice. Now in thought at any rate we are compelled to think of this Presence as both exterior and interior. If we are thinking of a human presence we can imagine ourselves at work in a room in which is seated another human being within reach of immediate communication. We may be busy at our work and entirely concentrated on it, and yet all the time we should be deeply conscious that we were working in the presence of another. We may never purposely formulate any thought of him in our mind or at any rate do so very rarely, and yet within our consciousness is the continual knowledge of the presence. Next we might speak to him from time to time, or sit at his feet and hear him speak to us. All this describes an exterior presence. If there be between the two a subtle sympathy of character and purpose, then the presence, though still mainly exterior, begins to approach something of the nature of inwardness ; person is beginning to penetrate person. All this may be a parable of simple methods of man's practice of the presence of God. A man is convinced that God is, and that His presence may be sacramentally realized. He knows that everywhere are God's thoughts and that where God's thoughts are there is He, and he strives to fill his inner consciousness with the truth of that Presence. He is in the Presence of God, he is working in the Presence of God. For the most part he does not speak to Him, but from time to time he may send out a cry for help or counsel, or he may rest for a moment in the certainty of His love ; we may call such movements of the spirit acts of faith or love or aspirations towards God, but in their essence they are the purposive contact of the human spirit with the Divine. Further, there are periodic intervals when the man speaks to the Divine Companion, and speaks with the definite purpose of expressing praise or gratitude, or even putting forth his desires and pleading for others. But still the presence is mainly an external presence. But in companion-

ship the speaking is not all one side; a great part of the exercise of friendship is listening. In the case of the Divine Companion who is also the King, the listening is essential. The voice may come sacramentally through the use of Holy Scripture or through teachers, or it may come directly, but the spirit must be trained to listen with expectation. It is here that the reality of the presence is confirmed and verified. His voice is heard and it is recognized as His voice. We may call the listening attitude meditation, but its essence is receptivity. When we take the words of Jesus Christ spoken on earth and ask Him to speak them to us and make their meaning under our present conditions plain to us, to feed us with His truth and to illumine us with His light, the conviction is verified that the speaker is none other than He Himself. There is generally something proper to itself and belonging to no other in the tone of a human voice. It can rarely be described, and no one can explain with scientific accuracy why he knows that it is that voice and no other that he heard. Experience testifies that it is the same with the voice of the Divine Friend; it is His and none other's; "they know His voice." When men alarmed by doubts as to whether we can be sure that the words recorded as Christ's are really His, the way to conviction lies in this listening. They sound in the soul as the words of One Whose voice is recognized and known. Modernist conjectures prove futile to one who has heard the voice. It matters no longer to him whether the Evangelist of the Fourth Gospel reported verbatim the utterances of Christ, for he knows by the recognition of the speaking Person that the eternal essence of the words which shall not pass away is being given to him by the Speaker as he is able to receive it.

Already we have passed to the thought that between the two who hold the converse in the language of the Kingdom of God there is that subtle sympathy of character and purpose which implies a penetration of spirit by spirit. That which we have described as exterior is becoming interior, and will be complete in the fullness of an indwell-

ing welcomed and recognized. When He says, "I am the Truth," He is speaking of Himself not merely as the prophet who gives true teaching of God but as the Self-Giver who seeks an entrance into men to illuminate their minds; He holds the lamp without but He carries the lamp within. When He says, "I am the Way," He is speaking of Himself not merely as the Guide who points out means whereby God shall be attained but as the very means Himself. When He says "I am the Life," He is speaking of Himself not merely as the Giver of immortality to men but as the very indwelling life of their spirits, upholding them in being. What we call outward passes necessarily into the inward when the spiritual conditions are fulfilled.

Thus the whole life of prayer may be described as a continuous passing of the external presence of God into the internal shrine of the human spirit; we hold converse with Him Who is without that He may penetrate more deeply and possess more completely the spirit that is within. Prayer is the co-operation of the human action with the Divine. Let us use as the supreme illustration of this prayer-life the Sacrament of the Body and the Blood. "In the beginning was the Word," or "In the beginning was the Thought." "The Thought was made flesh and tabernacled in us, the Thought that was the complete expression of God." All that the Thought of God transacted in the flesh, His birth, His life, His death, His resurrection is given to us in the Sacrament of the Body and the Blood. God's Supreme Thought of Incarnation and Sacrifice, His complete Self-Giving to men is there. Where His Thought is there is He, really present, immanent and transcendent. It is an exterior presence calling for our adoration and worship, but He is only exterior that He may penetrate within. We worship and adore that Thought and Presence, and He makes His home within. The sacramental life is the life of spiritual movement, of the entrance and acceptance of God. He dwells without and He dwells within, for the entrance is continuous though marked from time to

time by the great acts of sacramental communion. The light is in the room and yet the light is ever passing within from without; Christ dwells within the soul and yet He ever passes within from without. We live in the Eternal and the Eternal in us, and yet we have to think and act in time conditions. This double aspect of the life of prayer, which is the life of union with God, is found in our Lord's simile of the Vine and the Branches: "Abide in Me, and I in you." It is a Presence which is due to the co-operative action of God and man. They who seek to abide in the Presence which we describe as external, which surrounds and encompasses them as the light encompasses the eye, are they into whom that Presence penetrates, and He abides in them. "I in them and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one." Here is the consummation of the life of prayer.

Our Lord's teaching of the meaning of the Presence in the allegory of the Vine and the Branches is inherent in all St. Paul's writings. To St. Paul a Christian is not merely a believer in Christ or a follower of Christ, at any rate in the shallower sense of the word, but one who is in Christ and has the Christlife in him. But the process is not complete; "I count not myself to have apprehended," yet the process goes on until Christ is completely formed within us, for the Christ Who is in us is the Hope of glory; glory is the fullness of the Presence. The light shines out of the darkness, but light is not only an external beacon of conduct; it is to shine in our hearts. It begins by being external, we behold as in a mirror the Glory of the Lord; then as the Presence enters more and more fully we are changed into the same image from glory to glory. However far off we may be from the fullness of the glory, we may still in truth say, "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." It is the response to the Lord's appeal to deny ourselves. We are not to keep the self limited and ringed round with defences of selfishness; we are to refuse to be solitary and impervious within. Baptized into Christ we have put on Christ; but there is a further step, the great act of self-

renunciation which can make Christ free to enter and permeate the spirit which was created to be the Shrine of the Divine Presence. Yet all St. Paul's teaching shows how gradual the entrance is, a continuous process until He is "all."

Moreover, this process of the life of prayer, which is the life of the practice of the presence of God, seems to reverse itself as the spirit of man grows into the fullness of personal being, which is divinely indwelt personality. It begins apparently with the outward. Prayer, whatever form it may take, is addressed to God external to the spirit. The first great stage is when men cease to think of God as outside His universe, as a painter is outside the picture he has painted and may be absent from it; when they no longer think of Him as ruling creation from a distant heaven, to Whom telephonic messages may be sent; when they look on Nature as sacramental of the thought of God, and realize that His thought-will sustains it in being from moment to moment. Perceiving that it is His Presence, not His absence, that preserves it in being, they venture to speak to Him as intimately near. But still a sacrament begins as an external thing; even with the Supreme Sacrament of Jesus Christ it was necessarily so; the disciples followed Him as Guru before they admitted Him within. With the Sacrament of the Sacrament, the Holy Eucharist, it is the same; He in It is external to men. We can direct our adoration to the Altar, to the Tabernacle; He is there, for God's supreme consummating Thought of Love is there. If men think only of the external part of the Sacrament and fail to find Him within, then it becomes a commemorative sign of a presence that once was and now is not, of loving action that once was and now has ceased; they resemble those deists who thought of God as absent from His universe. But swiftly to the believer the outward passes into the inward. "He that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me"; "He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood, dwelleth in Me and I in him." When once this continuous passage from the outward to the

inward is recognized and welcomed, there comes the reversal in the life of prayer ; there comes a new spiritual standpoint. Prayer will no longer be directed mainly to the Christ external to the spirit ; it will be the practice of union with the Christ Who dwells within ; we shall begin with the inward and look out on the outward. We shall not so much be praying to the Christ outside us as uniting with the Christ Who prays within us. Petition, intercession, praise, gratitude, will still have their place in the life of prayer, but our weakness will be gathered up into His strength. He says Himself, " I say not unto you that I will pray the Father for you." Is it not because dwelling in us He prays in us to the Father Who loves us, because having loved the Son, believing that He came out from God, we have admitted Him and do admit Him into the sanctuary of the spirit ?

Our Lord's teaching on prayer implies this process of advance from the outward to the inward. When He said, " Ask and ye shall have, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you," He gave us our charter of spiritual adventure as we move onward from stage to stage into the Presence, and as the Presence more and more possesses us. Men begin with a sense of their need, and they express that need to an external power who is able to satisfy them. It is the cry of the infant conscious of its wants and feeling instinctively that there is something to supply them ; it is the petition of the beggar supplicating supplies. It corresponds with the activities of the primitive man in nature who demands from it the satisfaction of his physical necessities. On the exterior surface of things he obtains what he needs, the running stream gives him drink, the fruits and the animals provide him with food, the cave in the rocks offer him shelter ; he asks and he has. But there is the second stage, " seek and ye shall find." Man no longer looks on prayer as a means merely of supplying his wants as a dependent creature or of getting his own will done ; he begins to seek to know the will of God and to do it. This is prayer in the Name of Christ, the Name

of the Son ; it is the prayer, not merely of an infant or of a beggar, but it is the prayer of a son. A true son desires above all to know the father's will and co-operate with it. " Our Father . . . Hallowed be Thy Name, Thy will be done." So he seeks to know the will, to be in harmony with the principles of Essential Being ; the promise is fulfilled, for he seeks and he finds. Again, there is some true correspondence with the activities of man in nature, for as he advances from primitive savagery he seeks in profounder ways to know what the earth discloses. He digs in the ground and he unveils its treasures. He seeks the wealth of distant lands and he makes it his own. He discovers the laws of the universe and he co-operates with them ; he seeks and he finds. In spiritual co-operation spirit touches and penetrates spirit, and the process of inwardness begins. Prayer is no longer only the infant's cry and the beggar's supplication, it is the movement of the human spirit to seek the Father and to be the instrument of His will. But there is a higher stage still ; " Knock and it shall be opened unto you." It implies admission into the inner shrine of the Divine Presence, a partaking of His secrets, an enjoyment of His intimacy ; closeted together we hear His voice. Sonship remains sonship, but it passes into friendship. In the earthly relationship of son to father there is nothing more beautiful than when the son grows up and becomes his father's friend. There is nothing lost of that reverence which a son owes to his father, but admitted into the father's intimacy the son becomes the close companion and confidential friend. So Jesus Christ says to the disciples who have knocked and are admitted, " Ye are My friends. Henceforward I call you not servants ; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth ; but I have called you friends ; for all things that I have heard of My Father, I have made known unto you."

The process of inwardness is moving on to its fullness. And again, in natural things there is correspondence with this stage, for the investigator knocks at the door of nature's secrets, and the door is opened to him. For every door

that is opened other doors lie beyond, and the scientist goes on knocking knowing that he will be admitted into the inner mysteries of the universe whilst ever fresh mysteries call him on. The man who lives the prayer life knows that admitted into the friendship of God he will pass from strength to strength, from light to light, eternally, from sacrament to " face to face."

But this continuous movement from the outward to the inward which is the characteristic mark of the life of prayer carries with it another consequence. God is never represented in Holy Scripture as alone. The Presence of God seems always to imply the presence of those who in the heavenly sphere are in His presence ; " I am Gabriel that stand in the presence of God." There are the worshipping spirits who are sent forth to minister to human beings, and yet still stand in the presence. In Isaiah's vision when he saw the King, the Lord of hosts, there were the attendant spirits who cried, " Holy, Holy, Holy." We are told that when the Advent is fulfilled, and the Advent is not the coming from a distance of a Christ now absent, but the open manifestation of Him who is now really present but sacramentally veiled, Christ will not be alone ; the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ is with all His saints.

In the great passage of the *Hebrews* where the greatness of the status of Christians is set forth they are told " Ye are come " not, ye shall come " unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable hosts of angels, to the general assembly and Church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of a new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling."

To be in the presence of God and to have the presence of God in us is already to be enjoying the companionship of saints and angels ; it is the reality of the Communion of Saints. It follows that the passing from the outward to the inward in the life of prayer creates a new centre of consciousness. The Christian who has knocked and has

entered, who abides in Christ and has Christ in him, knows that already he sits with Him in heavenly places, and has his " conversation in heaven." It is from this heavenly centre that he is to look out on earth ; he looks from the within to the without, not from the without to the within. All true worship is heavenly worship and his task is not so much to send worship up from earth to heaven as to unite with the heavenly worship that never ceases. When he says, " Our Father," he is in union with the Son, who spoke of " My Father and your Father," with Blessed Mary and all the Saints ; for He breathes the great " Our " from within the presence in union with Jesus, the Mediator, and the spirits of just men made perfect. He is in the spiritual world, wherever his body may happen to be. His outward " conversation " must be among the things of sense-perception, but his real " conversation " is in heaven. The City may be hidden from his external sight but he knows that he is within, for he walks by faith not by sight.

Thus every Eucharist is not a self-contained action, complete in itself, offered from earth to heaven, but under conditions of time it is a uniting with the one perpetual Eucharist presented by the One High Priest who ever liveth to make intercession ; it is the coming to the Blood of sprinkling. You cannot multiply Eucharists, you can only multiply your acts of union with the one. There is but one Altar and one Eucharist, and living in the Presence, with the Presence in us, we are brought to that great Altar to partake of that Eucharist by the lifting of the earthly into the heavenly. Our fellow-worshippers are the angels and the spirits of just men made perfect.

It is one of the pathetic sights of India to see old men and old women taking long and laborious journeys along the sunscorched dusty roads. Stop one and ask him courteously, " Brother, where are you going ? " " I go," he will answer, " for the vision of God." But the vision of God is within, and those who try to live the prayer-life within the presence even now have the vision, dwelling in God and God in them.

CHAPTER X

THE TRIPLE SYMBOL OF THE INCARNATE PRESENCE

THE Presence of the transcendent God immanent in His Church by the Incarnation of Jesus Christ is pictured in Holy Scripture under more than one symbol. We have already briefly touched upon the symbol of the Vine whereby He is shown to be the Life of our life. The branches of the vine abide in the tree, and the tree is one whole. The Church is Christ and ourselves; "Every branch in Me," He says. The fruit is the fruit of the tree not the produce and possession of a branch; the branch is the means used by the whole to manifest its fruitfulness. Thus the branches in Christ have no fruits of their own; they exist that Christ may manifest in them the beauty of the Divine presence and character. Barrenness means that the life of Christ is being thwarted in its expression by our sinfulness and selfishness because we are making the branch an isolated centre instead of resting on our union with Christ. Christians who have the life of God in them are not set to attain certain virtues of their own but they are to be the conductors of the virtues of Christ. It is to be Christ's patience and gentleness and sympathy and courage which are to find an outlet in them. "The Lord direct your hearts," said St. Paul to the Thessalonians, "into the love of God and into the patience of Christ"; that is to say: "May God's love be revealed in you, may Christ's patience be expressed in you." "What hast thou that thou didst not receive?" asks St. Paul of the Christian. The truth conveyed in the question is not only that whatever natural and spiritual endowments we have received are not due to any creative efforts of our own, but that the excellences of character, the fruits of the Spirit, are not the excel-

lences of our character nor the fruits of our spirit but the excellences and fruits of the Vine, which is Christ. It is our task not to hinder the energies of the Life of the Vine by separateness, which is sin. Any form of self-narrowing, the gratification of our own selfish desires, the seeking of our own exclusive ends, is separateness ; it blocks out the Life of the Vine, and leads to barrenness and death.

This truth of the presence of the one life of God in Christ immanent in the whole and represented by the symbol of the Vine is a strong incentive to hope. It shows us our life not under the discouraging aspect of " How hard it is to be a Christian," but as the life of those who are receivers and conductors of eternal life. The emphasis is not primarily on struggle, though that cannot be forgotten, but on surrender. Self-denial seems to speak of fasting and scourging, of joys rejected and hardships accepted, but the self-denial of the New Testament is the surrender of a lover to his Love ; it is to be in love with God because He is in love with us ; it is the rejection of separateness and the acceptance of union ; it is not self-suppression but self-expansion, the enrichment of personality by the accepted immanence of the transcendent Lover. I need no longer think of my Christian course only as a struggle up the rocky steeps of holiness with many a slip back and stumble, nor as a race in which my breath fails and my knees grow paralysed, but I may think of it as the expression of a life and a presence which are God's. God's life is pressing on my life, upholding it, enfolding it, indwelling it and permeating it, and God's life must express itself in moral beauty.

God is out to seek receivers and conductors of Himself, because He wills us to be fruitful, and " the fruit of the Spirit of God is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, temperance." To say " How loving is such an one " is really to say " How God's love is seen in him, how little is he hindering the expression of God's life ! " The manifestation of human goodness is always a revelation of the Presence of God. Men are to be conductors of that Presence even as the branches are to be

conductors of the one life of the vine. Christians who respond to God are sacraments of the eternal to mankind, alike ministers and witnesses of its tranquillizing and fertilizing power. Even those who have been but lately grafted into the True Vine and have experienced Christian grace and truth for comparatively but a short time do thus witness and minister. In a village in South India some caste people came to an Indian bishop and suggested that he should move Government to issue an order that all people in the district should become Christians, for only such an enactment of Government would enable them to overcome the opposition and the persecution of the other castes. Their reason for desiring this was, they said, that they had seen God in the faces of the converts from the outcastes, and they wanted God to be in themselves like that. "These outcastes," they went on to say with amusing complacency, "are not naturally beautiful and handsome as we are, but now we have seen God in their faces." These poor disciples of Christ, saved by Him from the most degraded of the peoples of India and grafted as branches into the Eternal Vine, all unconsciously to themselves were being used as sacraments of the Eternal, conductors of the Presence.

But this truth which is an incentive both to hope and to humility is also a stimulus to penitence. It is an incentive to hope because it is His holiness that we have to express, not holiness like His which we have laboriously to acquire. It is an incentive to humility because it is not of ourselves but of Him. As well might a dewdrop sparkling like a diamond in the sun withdraw itself into the shade to take pleasure in its own brightness, as the Christian used for the expression of some of the beauty of God commend himself for the attainment of any virtue. Even a puddle in a muddy road can reflect something of the glory of the sky, but the glory is not the puddle's but the sky's. Hope and humility are completed by penitence, for we are continually blocking out the life and light of God, and hindering His Self-expression. Or to return to the allegory of the Vine,

the branches seek to be isolated and live their own life, and so they become withered ; the one fruitful life is His, and apart from Him they can do nothing. Even where there is a partial surrender, and the life of God can find some outlet, there are still holdings back and selfishnesses which call for bitter penitence.

Gladly to submit to the cleansing and the pruning is the mark of the penitent, for " Every branch that beareth fruit He purgeth " ; the motive of the penitent is not that he may get to heaven and enjoy himself, for he knows full well that getting to heaven is getting heaven into self, but the motive is that he may bring forth more fruit, that is, that God may reveal Himself more and more fully even in him. The very thought of personal merit is an abomination to self-denial ; " Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit." The thought of glory in the New Testament is always that of the hiddenness of God being expressed. The beauty of God's wisdom and love are there waiting for an epiphany, and when manifested are glory. When we speak of the greater glory of God we do not mean that God's wisdom and love can be more than they are, for to the Eternal no beauty can be added, but we mean that greater and greater becomes the expression of the Eternal as the spirits whom He has created surrender themselves to the indwelling of His life.

Immanent in them by His creative power, for in Him by His will and thought they physically live and move and have their being, He is transcendent in them only as they surrender themselves to the epiphany of His holiness. Often in St. Paul's writings we cannot be sure whether he is speaking of the Spirit of God or of the human spirit. It has rightly been called a blessed doubt. The human spirit has no other end than to be the home of the Divine, as the branch of the Vine has no other end than to be filled with the life of the tree.

The second of the three great illustrations of the Presence of God in Christ in mankind is that of the body and its members. " As the body is one, and hath many members,

and all the members of that one body being many, are one body: so also is Christ." "Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular." "The Church which is His body, the fullness of Him that is being fulfilled to be all in all." "We being many are one body in Christ, and every-one members one of another." As a tree exists for fruitfulness so a body exists for action. That body which of the substance of the Blessed Virgin Mary the Holy Spirit fashioned to be the expression on the physical plane of the Eternal Word or Thought of God was the instrument alike of His action and of His passion. He laid His hands on the sick and maimed, and through the touch of His body His healing power passed into them; His feet carried Him from place to place on errands of compassion and truth; His lips and tongue uttered the words of eternal life; His face was the expression of His love; His body was the instrument and channel of His activities, the sacrament of the reality of His presence. He, the Transcendent, was immanent therein, so that to touch It was to touch Him. He who taught and laboured through His body also suffered in It; eternally It carries the marks of His redeeming passion. If Christ is still present and still works and suffers in mankind, that is to say, if the Incarnation was not an isolated event in human history but is ever being extended in mankind as His body is being fulfilled, it means that the Holy Spirit is still fashioning of the substance of men that which is the sacrament of His Presence and the instrument of His activity and of His passion.

As the one life binds together into one the particles and cells and limbs and organs that make the unity of the ever-growing physical expression of a man, so the one Spirit takes human beings as particles and cells and limbs and organs and binds them into the unity of the mystical body, ever growing to its perfection, of the New Man, who is Christ. Christ has His lips, His hands and feet on earth, and where they are, there the body is, there is He. Here the stress is not as in the symbol of the Vine upon the beauty of the Divine character which finds its epiphany in those who are grafted

into His life, but upon the energies of the service which the Divine Servant is giving to mankind. It is His service, not ours ; he who is annexed to Christ for the ministrations of the sanctuary is the organ through and in whom Christ, the one Priest, presents His sacrifice ; his are the hands Christ makes His own to feed the hungry with the Bread of heaven.

So with all the manifold ministrations of the New Man, who is Christ ; He teaches through the lips of His members, He soothes and heals through the hands of those who have been united to Himself. He does not merely encourage from a distance and call upon us to do actions like His ; we are His body and He is present in It and the actions are His not ours. As the teaching given is not the teaching of the lips, nor the energies of service the action of the hands, but are the teaching and actions of the whole personality, so is it with the Christ ; present in the Body which is His, He and He alone teaches and ministers.

But a natural body is not only the instrument of the activity of the personality who expresses himself through it ; it may also be the medium of his pain. Pain is the means chosen or accepted by God for the redemption of the world. Christ suffered in the flesh ; it was largely through His flesh that pain passed into His spirit. His body was hungry and thirsty and weary ; it was scourged and crucified ; it endured the separation from the spirit which we call death.

Mankind has not changed ; sin still persists ; pain is still the means of redemption, and Christ still suffers in His mystical body. His Passion is plainly recognized in the sufferings and deaths of the martyrs. Truly they suffered and died for Christ, but more truly Christ suffered and died in them. " Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me ? " " I am Jesus Whom thou persecutest." In all three accounts of the conversion of St. Paul, differing otherwise in the details selected, the central fact is recorded that it was Christ Himself whom the zealot was persecuting. It is not " Why do you persecute My followers ? It is My disciples

whom you imprison and slay." The mystical body of Christ was the medium of His pain, for He was immanent in it. This fact explains in part the greatness of the reverence paid to the martyrs; it was the surpassing honour paid to the wounded hands and feet of Christ Himself.

The pain of the members of the body may have a wider interpretation and significance. Martyrdom is easily intelligible; it is the pain inflicted on the body of Christ by the sins of men. But there is grievous pain which is not attributable, at any rate not obviously or directly attributable, to the sins of men. There is the torture of agonizing disease, the sharp stab of the cancer, the pitiful struggle of the throat gripped by diphtheria, and innumerable other physical distresses which afflict the children of men, "for the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together." Few of the experiences which men undergo have such power to perplex them. They can see that the capacity to suffer pain has a protective use and that the body is often preserved from serious accident by the danger-signal of pain, but the pangs of disease seem to them alike futile and unnecessary. Yet all pain must have a purpose in a rational world, and of this we may be sure that there is no physical suffering which cannot be offered to God and used by Him. St. Paul could rejoice in his sufferings, and some of them were probably due to disease, and the reason of his joy was this: "They fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for His body's sake." The immanence of the transcendent Christ in the body carries with it the far-reaching truth that every pang of pain endured by those who are in union with Him is put into the treasury of His pain and used. Thus every sufferer may be a sacrament and conductor of His presence. The afflictions of Christ are in His flesh; and there is something more; they are not wasted; they are "for His body's sake." Who looking upon the scourging and crucifixion of Christ would not have counted His pain the most pitiful of waste? Yet that pain is the redemption of the world.

Who looking upon the physical pains of the bodies of men can fail to ask, "My God, my God, why?" The one answer that can in any way satisfy is that which can only be given by those who believe in the real presence of Christ in His body, and know that somehow or other sufferings which are His cannot be in vain. Wherever there is pain offered and consecrated it is the sacrament of the presence of Christ.

But it is not only the pain of the body which may be the epiphany of the presence of Christ; any kind of helplessness or need or want is used by Him as the sacrament of Himself; with such intimate nearness has He taken to Himself the whole human race that the weakest of its members, the most needy and helpless are pre-eminently Himself, united to Him as closely as the limbs of a person are to the whole personality.

What are more weak and helpless than little children? "Whosoever shall receive one of such children in My Name receiveth Me." It matters not whether they are of the East or West, of Paris, or Calcutta or Manchester; to receive one such child is to receive Christ. The poor and the needy and the sick reveal the presence of His body. "I was an hungered and ye gave Me meat: I was thirsty and ye gave Me drink: I was a stranger and ye took Me in: naked and ye clothed Me: I was sick and ye visited Me: I was in prison and ye came unto Me."

We get, as so often, two complementary truths; as the God Whom we worship without ourselves is the God Whom we worship within, so the Christ Who ministers with His mystical body to men is the Christ Who has made the flesh of the helpless and suffering His own and is ministered to by us. He is within and without, immanent and transcendent.

The third of the great symbols of the reality of the Presence of God in Christ in His Church and in each human spirit as a microcosm of that Church is the symbol of the Temple. It is the supplement of the images of the Vine and the Body and is given to us by our Lord Himself. "He

spake of the temple of His body." The servant caught hold of the thought : " Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you ? " " Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you ? . . . The temple of God is holy, which temple ye are." In the same epistle as that in which St. Paul speaks of the Church as Christ's body in which His being is fulfilled he pictures it also as the temple growing to completeness ; " In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord : in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit."

The whole and each part of the whole is to be the place of God's rest, the sanctuary in which His Presence is. " What house will ye build Me, saith the Lord ? or what is the place of My rest ? " It is ours to make the temple really His, to drive out all that spoils its calm, all irritation and impatience and vanity, for it is here that He is pleased to dwell. Those who are most occupied in service are those who most need the recollection and the quiet of the temple wherein is to be found the tabernacle of the Presence.

It is said that one of the secrets of a deep, calm, tranquil spirit is possessing and being possessed by great thoughts and visions ; for whatever we veritably possess we end by being possessed by. But the Christian faith is that we possess and are possessed by the very Thought of God Himself, the Thought that became flesh and dwelt in us, and the vision which we are to contemplate is the vision of " His glory, full of grace and truth."

There is indeed a stillness of spirit which is negative, for it is the fruit of apathy. It is the ideal put before those who believe that desire is the root of all evil and that it is only by slaying desire that peace can come. This is the aim put forth in the Bhagavadgita, which is now regarded by Hindus as the only possible rival to the Christian Gospels. Desire in every form in all its subtleties must be stifled and slain ; then, and then only, will there be peace, and the spirit know itself to be God. But the Christian's

tranquillity is due not to apathy, but to sympathy, and the sympathy is that delight in the character and purpose of God which makes His ways our ways, and His thoughts our thoughts. He can only fully enter where the temple is prepared, that is, where there is such sympathy that the human personality can be indeed penetrated by the Divine. He penetrates and indwells the personality that He may express His own moral beauty, as the life of the vine indwells the branches to bring forth the grapes. He penetrates and indwells the personality that He may minister in loving service and suffer fruitful pain, as the body uses its members to act and endure. He penetrates and indwells the personality that He may find the place of His rest, as the temple is built to be the habitation of God. As men may be the conductors of the Presence of God to others by expressing something of the beauty which is not theirs but His, as they can be conductors of the Presence by service and suffering, which He offers and not they, so also can they be conductors of His Presence in the deep calm and tranquillity with which they confront the changes and chances of this fleeting world. They look out on the temporal from the eternal, and the centre of their consciousness is not earth but those heavenly places in which we sit with Him.

The transcendent God thus becomes truly immanent in His people as they surrender themselves to the indwelling of His life, that they may be the epiphany of His character, the agents of His service, the sufferers of His pain, and the sanctuary of His rest.

CHAPTER XI

THE PRACTICE OF THE PRESENCE

THE very use of the phrase, "the practice of the Presence," suggests that the Presence is not apprehended without effort and discipline. One of the Hebrew prophets complained, "Verily Thou art a God that hidest Thyself." It is not now to our purpose to enquire why it is difficult at first for most men to apprehend the Presence of God; it is enough to recognize that it is so. Yet we may also freely acknowledge that the search for God has made man a greater and a nobler being by the very fact that in the activity of his search he has opened the door of his spirit to a fuller entrance of the Divine. In the very act of sincere seeking he may approach the fullness of his manhood. God promises, "Seek and ye shall find"; it may be that He hides Himself that we may become more truly men by seeking Him. In the intellectual life of men the same holds true. The whole story of science is a story of "hide and seek." We are told that in every drop of dew and every mote of dust there is electricity, but men had to search for long years before they found it and made it their own, and in their seeking and their finding they grow towards the stature of their intellectual manhood. Yet there is one profound difference between the spiritual quest and the intellectual quest. In science the effort is all on one side; in the active life of the spirit the seeking is on both sides. If we are bidden to "Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness" we know also that "the Father seeketh such to worship Him." There is a saying that "where two go a'seeking there is sure to be a'finding," and our comfort is that the end of the quest is sure, for "those that seek Me early shall find Me."

The spiritual life is life lived consciously in the Presence of God. A spiritual man is one in whom the consciousness of this Presence is the dominant factor of his life. This Presence has for most of us gradually to be apprehended by practice, beginning with disciplined effort and passing by degrees into habitual recollection and therefore habitual companionship. As long as religion is regarded only as the faithful performance of a round of duties, so many prayers to be said and so many good deeds to be done, it fails to lift man into the spiritual sphere ; it is of law and not of grace. But when religion becomes the apprehension of a Presence, which passes into a life of mutually indwelling fellowship, it is of grace and not of law.

All personal life must be lived in fellowship with persons, for personal fellowship is of the essential constitution of Divine Reality. God is the Ultimate Personal Fellowship. He is not three Divine individuals or three united Deities, but Three Persons or Trifold Personality, and persons live by indwelling. Nor can there be indwelling without self-denial, and therefore self-denial is the supreme mark of the Divine Being. " They are not three Eternals, but one Eternal " ; " They are not three Almighties, but one Almighty " ; " They are not three Gods, but one God." There are not three impervious Divine individuals in the Godhead, but three mutually indwelling Persons living eternally by the interchange of life which is love.

Fellowship amongst men is indispensable to the growth and development of personality ; it is " as in heaven, so in earth." Most people know by experience how some personalities seem to evoke from others certain forms of self-expression which otherwise lie dormant. In the presence of some people the personality of a man seems to shrivel and shrink, whilst in the presence of others it seems to expand and enlarge and even take to itself new qualities and capacities. The same man may appear to be almost a new personality when he is brought into new personal relationships. Perfect personality will call out all that is best in other persons and be the instrument of their growth

towards completeness. This perfect Personality is God. This is why the practice of the Presence of God is everything in religion; only by fellowship with this Presence can the personalities of men reach their full development, and by full development is meant the becoming, according to their measure, conductors of the Being and Character of God, dwelling in Him and He in them. A saint is just an ordinary human being who by companionship with God has been filled by Him. Compare John the fisher-lad with St. John the Apostle and we see human personality fulfilled and enriched by the indwelling of Christ; "Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God." "He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God and God in him."

Men of faith, that is men who use and develop the organ by which the spiritual is apprehended, may be divided roughly into two classes. There is a very small class to whom the world of spirit is immeasurably more real than the world of matter. They are the mystics who seek God and apprehend His Presence immediately and directly. They follow for the most part the negative way. But the vast majority of men of faith have no such experience, or at any rate such an experience has only come once or twice like a lightning-flash into their lives. This class have to follow the simple methods of the practice of the Presence of God, seeking in the Blessed Sacrament and prayer and meditation and nature the hidden God who is seeking them, seeking the Kingdom of the King who does not seem to reign, because amongst men here He still reigns from the Cross.

In this practice of the Presence we must not begin, as Brother Lawrence apparently began, with nature, or, to put it in technical language, with the immanence of God in the universe. Brother Lawrence, of course, only apparently thus began. He really carried to his contemplation of the tree budding in the spring the knowledge which he had of the transcendent God as revealed in Jesus Christ. Our practice of the Presence of God must be based on our know-

ledge of the transcendence of God as made known to us by His intercourse with men, which we call inspiration, by which He reveals Himself pre-eminently as holiness and love, as wisdom and righteousness. In other words, we have to base our practice first on authority, taking as our guide the experience of those who testify that the Word of God has come to them. We accept the fact of the existence of God and His transcendency on the authority of others, just as much as we accept natural truths of science on the authority of others. We trust their experience.

But religion based solely on authority loses its hold on men. The child who says his prayers because his mother tells him that God is present and hears him will after a time want some experience of that Presence. Authority, which is the trusted experience of others' intercourse with God, has always its great place in the religious life, but it must be supplemented, confirmed, verified and crowned by the facts of spiritual experience. Probably this spiritual experience with most people begins to take its rise through the use of that great collection of spiritual literature which we call the Bible. It records indeed other people's experiences, but as soon as they begin seriously, earnestly, and persistently to seek for the knowledge of God through that Book they find that He Who spoke to others speaks to them. Now a speaker whom we hear is present. There is an appeal to their conscience and idealism which nothing else has ever made, and they begin, however feebly, without perhaps knowing what they are doing, to practise the Presence of God. They begin to experience, however dimly, the sense of the Presence; "these are not my thoughts but His, and He Who puts thoughts into my heart must be here."

But authority, which is the trusted experience of others, reaching down the long ages of the past, gives us clues to the interpretation of the Bible. The Society in which the seeker for God finds himself incorporated teaches that the supreme clue to the interpretation of the New Testament is the Deity of Jesus Christ, and the only clue to the inter-

pretation of the Old Testament is belief in the New. With these clues he begins to interpret the transcendency of God not only in the terms of purposive power but in terms of human holiness and love, of the sacrifice of the Cross. The Gospels have led him to the supreme Sacrament of God in Jesus Christ. For the first time it may be the thought of immanence takes hold of him. If Jesus Christ has the full value of God, then God is wholly immanent in Him. A sacrament is the wedding of the Divine transcendency with the Divine immanence; "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was God . . . and the Word was made flesh and dwelt among (in) us." Thus the search for the Presence has reached a further stage. God is immanent in Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ is immanent by the bestowal of His Spirit in His mystical Body, the Church, in His sacraments, and in the spirits of men in whose hearts He dwells when they welcome Him by faith. The task is now to seek Him here.

It is only when we are saturated with the vision of the beauty of God as we find Him immanent in Jesus Christ that we can pass to the contemplation of the natural world and seek the Presence there. Our knowledge of the moral beauty of God is not derived from the physical creation apart from man. But with the sure knowledge of that moral beauty we can then find His Presence in the natural beauty and order of the universe. All that exists in accordance with His will is a sacrament of that Presence; the budding tree becomes a witness of the immanence of Him whom we know to be transcendently good.

There is indeed always a danger of resting on the external in nature, of enjoying its strength and beauty instead of passing through it to the Divine Whose thought it is, to the Presence of the Thinker without Whose Presence it could not be. St. Augustine asks, "What bride will say, My husband has given me so many beautiful things that I have forgotten him, yet man has said so of God." But God's beautiful things are more than gifts; they are the sacraments of His Presence. To enjoy the outward without

passing to the inward is like going to the Blessed Sacrament for the taste of the bread and wine without a thought of the Body and the Blood which are verily and indeed there.

Thus the spiritual life is the practice of the Presence. To be in the Presence, to know that we are in the Presence, and to know that this Presence is ever passing into us in response to our faith and love, is to " Continue instant in prayer " and to " Pray without ceasing."

To pray without ceasing we must use every sacramental help to the experience of the Presence, and there must be an alertness of spirit to apprehend Its signs. The signs of a human presence are easily and naturally recognized ; the signs of the Divine Presence are equally apprehensible, but they need the persevering practice of the spirit. God is ever expressing Himself and we are to be on the alert to recognize and rejoice in and hold companionship with the ever-present Divine. Our purpose is to form a habit, and a habit implies that frequent acts of recollection and apprehension have passed into our subliminal consciousness. The human mind has been compared in one respect with an iceberg ; only one-tenth of its bulk is visible above the surface of the waves, whilst the remainder is submerged and hidden. So with the human mind ; its contents are mostly hidden, but yet these hidden contents are influencing what is in the upper consciousness. In the practice of the Presence of God a series of spiritual recollections has been consciously made. These recollections keep passing into the hidden mind until the habit of recollection is formed, and the apprehension of the Presence comes as " naturally " as the apprehension of a human presence.

The primary condition of the formation of such a habit of recollection is the power of concentration. It is what we pay attention to that matters. Heaven and earth are full of His glory, that is, heaven and earth are full of the expressions of His wisdom, love and power, but the human mind cannot pay attention to the whole universe at once. We have to concentrate on one particular object, and find

in that object a sacrament of the Presence of God. The Christian must begin with no less than Jesus Christ as representing to him the whole value of God. To begin with the immanence of God in nature is the source of all idolatry, for idolatry is in its essence a false thought concerning God. "My thoughts are not your thoughts." An idol is man's false thought of God. The educated Hindu always defends his use of idols by saying that they help him to concentrate his mind on one aspect of the infinite Divine Being. The only adequate answer is to bid him concentrate on the noblest and highest, and Jesus Christ is presented to him as the richest self-expression of God in love which is sacrifice. All creation is a form of Divine self-expression and therefore a form of incarnation, but the climax of creation is when God enters into human nature in all the perfection of His Being. God may in a measure express Himself in a sunset; but the fullness of His self-expression is in Jesus Christ.

The first step in the practice of the Presence of God is to concentrate on the reality of the Presence of Jesus Christ through the Spirit. Nor does this concentration lead to the conception of a limited Presence. He who finds God's supreme Thought in the broken Body and in the Blood poured forth, in God expressed in incarnate love and sacrifice, is he who knows that the Presence flows unceasingly into those who can receive It. He Who is without us in that Body and Blood is He Who is within us; whilst He who is within us is He Whose thought is sustaining the universe in being. We must begin with the highest and then we pass on to find the Presence in the two or three gathered together in His Name. When we are spatially absent from the Presence in the Blessed Sacrament we do not suppose ourselves to be spatially absent from His Presence; to go out of Church does not mean that we have left His Presence behind. It does mean that as creatures of time and space we have passed out of physical nearness to external expression of God's supreme Thought in the incarnation and sacrifice, but we still stand in the Presence of God.

The symbol of light, given to us by Christ, helps us to realize that what seems static may ever be flowing in. What seems stiller than light, yet what is swifter in its penetrating movement? God is ever in activity and ever at rest.* His Presence is there at rest in the stillness of the Tabernacle, yet His Presence is ever moving into the hearts of men.

We work in the light, but we are not continually consciously recalling the fact of the presence of light; yet the light is known to be there. Repeated acts of recollection pass into habitual recollection. Special times of prayer, special acts of communion, will be no longer little islands in a sea of forgetfulness, but they will be expressions of a continuous life of companionship. Those who practise the Presence will not be bored by loneliness, for they will not be lonely. Hours of waiting in stations or long journeys will not be wasted time, for they will be especial opportunities of intercourse. Solitary walks will not be solitary because the Companionship will never fail. Carrying our knowledge of the love and holiness of God into contact with the outward world we shall recognize everywhere the flashes of the manifestation of His Presence. We shall find It in the beauty of tree and flower, in the blue of the mountains and the music of running waters, in the shining eyes of little children and the sweetness of their innocence. We shall find It in the gladness of their faces as friend grips the hand of friend, in the tenderness and pity of the nurse as she bends over the patient, in the loving gladness of the mother as she clasps her infant to her breast. All these and ten million others will be expressions of the real Presence of that transcendent God whom we have found immanent in Jesus Christ.

* "Semper agens, semper quietus" (S. Augustine).

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